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No. 41

The Drama




VICTORIAN EDITION


The Drama

ITS HISTORY, LITERATURE
AND INFLUENCE ON
CIVILIZATION

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
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British Drama

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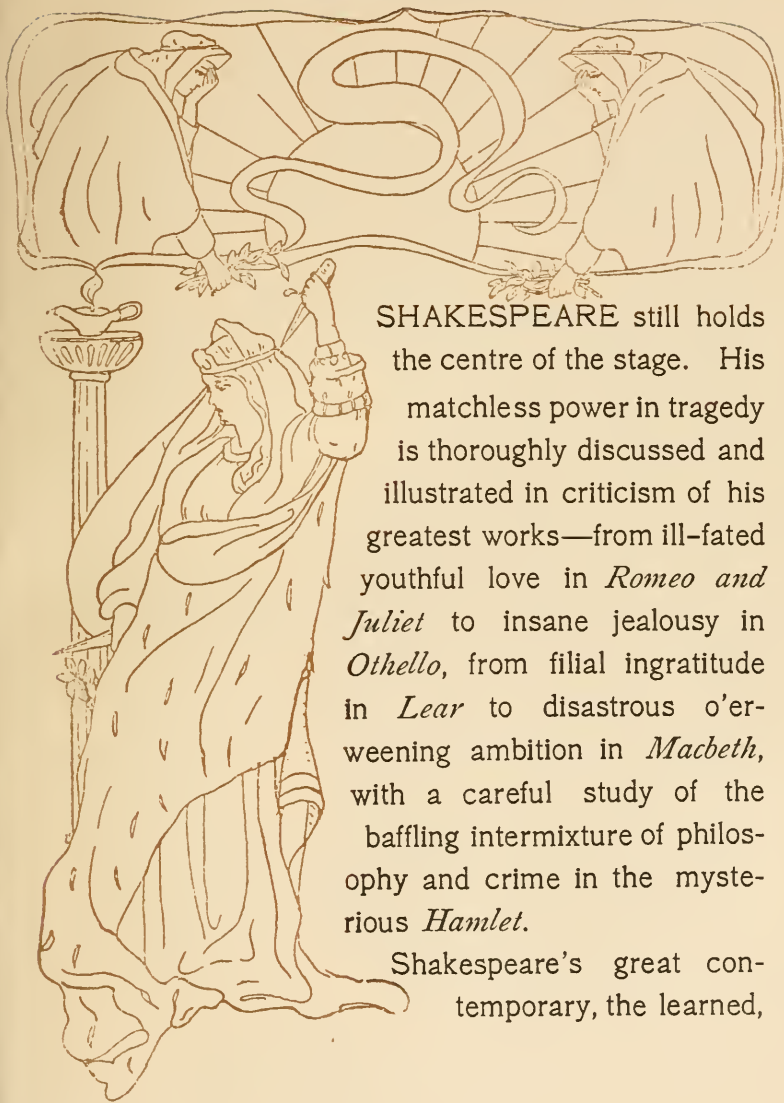
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Prologue



SHAKESPEARE still holds the centre of the stage. His matchless power in tragedy is thoroughly discussed and illustrated in criticism of his greatest works—from ill-fated youthful love in *Romeo and Juliet* to insane jealousy in *Othello*, from filial ingratitude in *Lear* to disastrous o'erweening ambition in *Macbeth*, with a careful study of the baffling intermixture of philosophy and crime in the mysterious *Hamlet*.

Shakespeare's great contemporary, the learned,

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conceited but powerful Ben Jonson, is shown to have succeeded best in his comedies, because there his native farce was not overweighted by his knowledge of the ancient classics. The peculiar character of his dramatic talent is well shown in *Every Man in his Humor*, which is here presented in full. But the glorious Elizabethan age abounded in comic and tragic dramatists of high order. We pass on to the unique literary partnership of Beaumont and Fletcher, and offer as specimen of their joint production the *Knight of the Burning Pestle*, in which, as in *Hamlet*, a play is presented inside a play, though in this instance a homely comedy, which must have excited the risibles of London citizens. In the *Two Noble Kinsmen* Fletcher is thought by some critics to have collaborated with Shakespeare,

The flourishing period of the English drama extended through the reign of the pedantic James I. into the troublous times of Charles I., when, at the opening of the Parliamentary war, the theatres were closed by the Puritans who had risen into power. Among the latest dramatists of this period was the skilful Massinger, whose best comedy was

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given in the previous volume, and whose merits are here discussed.

With the restoration of Charles II., in 1660, the ban on the theatres was removed. But it was soon found that the entire character of the drama was changed. The royalist exiles had become accustomed to the polished licentiousness of the French stage, and demanded something similar from English playwrights now free to display their ability. The latter in their clumsy effort to respond overdid the matter, and produced plays which offended public taste by their grossness. Tragedy as well as comedy was smirched with filth. Even the glorious Dryden, as he afterward confessed, stooped to cater to the taste of the prurient playgoers. His versatile genius was not so well adapted to the drama as to satire. Yet in his "heroic plays," as he called his rhymed tragedies, he approached the level of Ben Jonson. Singular as it may appear, one of his successes was in recasting Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* into *All for Love*, but his attempt to transform part of Milton's *Paradise Lost* into an opera was a ridiculous failure. Otway shared with Dryden the honors of the classical school of

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that time, and his *Venice Preserved* is occasionally seen on the stage.

Our sketch of Congreve, Wycherley and the other comic dramatists of the Restoration is necessarily brief, but we give a sufficient example of their works in Sir John Vanbrugh's *Provoked Husband*.



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English Drama.

PART II.

I.

Shakespeare's Tragedies.

Shakespearean tragedy ranks so far above all other forms of tragic art, so far even above the classic drama, that no comparison is possible. Nowhere else is displayed with equal completeness the struggle between will and obstacle, character and circumstance. Nowhere is mirrored with equal power and variety the working of those passions by the mastery of which man controls his doom. Shakespeare opened to modern tragedy a range of hitherto unknown breadth and depth and height, and emancipated the national drama in its noblest forms from limits to which it will never again be restricted.

Characterization.

For his knowledge of mankind Shakespeare has been called the master of the human heart. His characters

neither do nor say anything merely on the spectator's account, and yet, without any subsidiary explanation, he communicates to his audience the gift of looking into their minds. As Goethe has said, his characters resemble watches with crystalline plates and cases, which, while they point out the hours as correctly as other watches, enable us to perceive the inward springs whereby this is accomplished. Nothing, however, is more foreign to Shakespeare than the anatomical style of exhibition, laboriously enumerating all the motives by which a man is determined to act. After all, a man acts in a certain manner, not through external influences, but because he is so; and what each man is, that Shakespeare reveals to us, demanding and obtaining our belief, even for what is singular and deviates from the ordinary course of nature. Never, perhaps, was there so comprehensive a talent for characterization. It not only grasps every diversity of rank, age and sex down to the lisping of infancy; not only do the king and the beggar, the hero and the pickpocket, the sage and the idiot, speak and act with equal truthfulness; not only does he transport himself to distant ages and foreign nations, and portray with the greatest accuracy the spirit of the ancient Romans, of the French in the wars with the English, of the English themselves during a great part of their history, the cultivated society of the day, and the rude barbarism of a Norman fore-time; his human characters have not only such depth and individuality that they do not admit of being classed under common names, and are inexhaustible even in conception; but he opens the gates of the magical world of spirits, calls up the midnight ghost,

exhibits before us the witches with their unhallowed rites, peoples the air with sportive fairies and sylphs; and these beings, though existing only in the imagination, nevertheless possess such truth and consistency that even with such misshapen abortions as Caliban, he extorts the assenting conviction that were there such beings, they would so conduct themselves. In a word, as he carries a bold and pregnant fancy into the kingdom of nature, on the other hand, he carries nature into the regions of fancy, which lie beyond the confines of reality.

Passion and Pathos.

Equally remarkable is his exhibition of passion, taking this word in its broadest significance, as including every mental condition, every tone, from indifference, content or mirth to the wildest rage and despair. He gives us the history of minds; he lays open to us, in a single word, a whole series of their anterior states. His passions do not stand at the same height, from first to last, as is the case with so many tragic poets, who, in the language of Lessing, are thorough masters of the legal style of love. He paints, with inimitable veracity, the gradual advance from the first origin; "he gives," as Lessing says, "a living picture of all the slight and secret artifices by which a feeling steals into our souls, of all the imperceptible advantages which it gains there, of all the stratagems by which it makes every other passion subservient to itself, till it becomes the sole tyrant of our desires and our aversions."

The objection that Shakespeare wounds our feelings

by the open display of the most disgusting moral obliquity, unmercifully harrows up the mind, and even tortures us by the exhibition of the most hateful spectacles, is one of grave importance. He has, in fact, never varnished over wild and bloodthirsty passions with a pleasing exterior, never clothed crime and want of principle with a false show of greatness of soul; but in that respect he is rather to be commended than censured. The reading, and still more the sight, of some of his pieces, may not be advisable for weak nerves, any more than was the *Prometheus* of Æschylus; but is the poet, who can only reach an important object by a bold and hazardous flight, to be checked by considerations for such persons? If the effeminacy of the present day is to serve as a general standard of what tragical composition may properly exhibit to human nature, we shall be forced to set very narrow limits, indeed, to art, and the hope of anything like powerful effect must at once and forever be renounced. If we wish to have a grand purpose, we must also have the means to correspond, and our nerves ought in some measure to accommodate themselves to painful impressions, if, by way of requital, our mind is thereby elevated and strengthened. Fortunately for his art, Shakespeare lived in an age extremely susceptible of noble and tender impressions, but which had yet inherited enough of the firmness of a vigorous olden time, not to shrink with dismay from strong and forcible painting. We have lived to see tragedies of which the catastrophe consists in the swoon of an enamored princess; if Shakespeare falls occasionally into the opposite extreme, it is a noble error, originating in the

fullness of a gigantic strength. And this tragical Titan, who storms the heavens and threatens to tear the world from off its hinges, who, more terrible than Æschylus, makes our hair to stand on end and congeals our blood with horror, possessed at the same time the insinuating loveliness of the sweetest poesy; he toys with love like a child, and his songs die away on the ear like melting sighs. He unites in his soul the utmost elevation and the utmost depth; and the most opposite and even apparently irreconcilable properties subsist in him peaceably together. The world of spirits and nature have laid all their treasures at his feet; in strength a demi-god, in profundity of view a prophet, in all-seeing wisdom a guardian spirit of a higher order, he lowers himself to mortals as if unconscious of his superiority, and is as open and unassuming as a child.

If the delineation of all his characters, separately considered, is inimitably bold and correct, he surpasses even himself in so combining and contrasting them that they serve to bring out each other's peculiarities. This is the very perfection of dramatic characterization, for we can never estimate a man's true worth if we consider him altogether abstractedly by himself; we must see him in his relations with others, and it is here that most dramatic poets are deficient. Shakespeare makes each of his principal characters the glass in which the others are reflected, and by like means enables us to discover what could not be immediately revealed to us. What in others is most profound is with him but surface. Ill advised should we be, were we always to take men's declarations respecting themselves and others for sterling

coin. Ambiguity of design he makes to overflow with the most praiseworthy principles, and sage maxims are not infrequently put in the mouth of stupidity, to show how easily such commonplace truisms may be acquired. Nobody ever painted so truthfully as he has done the facility of self-deception, the half self-conscious hypocrisy toward ourselves, with which even noble minds attempt to disguise the inevitable influence of selfish motives in human nature. This secret irony of characterization is one of his elements of strength; but it is the grave of enthusiasm. We arrive at it only after we have had the misfortune to see human nature through and through, as Shakespeare did, and when no choice remains but to adopt the melancholy truth that "no virtue or greatness is altogether pure and genuine," or the dangerous error that "the highest perfection is attainable."

Romeo and Juliet.

Between tragedy and comedy the transition is often but slightly marked. Thus *Romeo and Juliet* and *Othello* differ but little from most of Shakespeare's comedies in their ingredients and treatment—it is simply the direction of the whole that gives them the stamp of tragedy. *Romeo and Juliet* is a picture of love and its pitiable fate in a world whose atmosphere is too sharp for this, the tenderest blossom of human life. Two beings created for each other feel mutual love at the first glance; every consideration disappears before the irresistible impulse to live for one another; under circumstances hostile in the highest degree to their union, they unite themselves

by a secret marriage, relying simply on the protection of an invisible power. Untoward incidents following in rapid succession, their heroic constancy is within a few days put to the proof, till, forcibly separated from each other, by a voluntary death they are united in the grave to meet again in another world.

All this is to be found in the beautiful story which was told long before Shakespeare's day, and which, however simply told, will always excite a tender sympathy; but it was reserved for Shakespeare to join in one ideal picture purity of heart with warmth of imagination; sweetness and dignity of manners with passionate intensity of feeling. Under his handling, it has become a glorious song of praise on that inexpressible feeling which ennobles the soul and gives to it its highest sublimity, and which elevates even the senses into soul, while at the same time it is a melancholy elegy on its inherent and imparted frailty; it is at once the apotheosis and the obsequies of love. It appears here a heavenly spark that, as it descends to the earth, is converted into the lightning flash, which almost in the same moment sets on fire and consumes the mortal being on whom it lights. All that is most intoxicating in the odor of a southern spring, all that is languishing in the song of the nightingale or voluptuous in the first opening of the rose, all alike breathe forth from this poem. But even more rapidly than the earliest blossoms of youth and beauty decay, does it, from the first timidly bold declaration and modest return of love, hurry on to unlimited passion, to an irrevocable union; and then hasten, amid alternating storms of rapture and despair, to the fate

of the two lovers, who yet appear enviable in their hard lot, for their love survives them, and by their death they have obtained an endless triumph over every separating power. The sweetest and the bitterest love and hatred, festive rejoicings and dark forebodings, tender embraces and sepulchral horrors, the fullness of life and self-annihilation, are here all brought close to each other; and yet these contrasts are so blended into a unity of impression, that the echo which the whole leaves in the mind resembles a single but endless sigh.

The first scenes of nearly every play of Shakespeare are remarkable for the skill with which they prepare the mind for all the after scenes. We do not see the succession of scenes; the catastrophe is unrevealed; but we look into a dim and distant prospect, and by what is in the foreground we can form a general notion of the landscape that will be presented to us, as the clouds roll away and the sun lights up its wild mountains or its fertile valleys. When Sampson and Gregory enter "armed with swords and bucklers"—when we hear "a dog of the house of Montague moves me"—we know that these are not common servants, and live not in common times; with them the excitement of party spirit does not rise into strong passion—it presents its ludicrous side. They quarrel like angry curs, who snarl, yet are afraid to bite. But the "furious Tybalt" in a moment shows us that these hasty quarrels cannot have peaceful endings. The strong arm of authority suspends the affray, but the spirit of enmity is not put down. The movement of this scene is as rapid as the quarrel itself. It produces the effect upon the mind of

something which startles; but the calm immediately succeeds. Benvolio's speech—

Madam, an hour before the worshipp'd sun
Peer'd forth the golden window of the east,

at once shows us that we are entering into the region of high poetry. Coleridge remarks that the succeeding speech of old Montague exhibits the poetical aspect of the play even more strikingly:

Many a morning hath he there been seen,
With tears augmenting the fresh morning's dew.

It is remarkable that the speech thus commencing, which contains twenty lines as highly wrought as anything in Shakespeare, is not in the first copy of this play. The experience of the artist taught him where to lay on the poetical coloring brighter and brighter. How beautifully these lines prepare us for the appearance of Romeo—the now musing, abstracted Romeo—the Romeo who, like the lover of Chaucer,

Solitary was ever alone,
And walking all the night, making moan.

The love of Romeo was unrequited love. It was a sentiment rather than a passion—a love that solaced itself in antithetical conceits upon its own misery, and would draw consolation from melancholy associations. It was love without the “true Promethean fire,” but it was a fit preparation for what was to follow. The dialogue between Capulet and Paris prepares us for Juliet—the “hopeful lady of his earth,” who

Hath not seen the change of fourteen years.

The old man does not think her "ripe to be a bride;" but we are immediately reminded of the precocity of nature under a southern sun, by another magical touch of poetry, which tells us of youth and freshness—of summer in "April"—of "fresh female buds" breathing the fragrance of opening flowers. Juliet at length comes. We see the submissive and gentle girl; but the garrulity of the nurse carries us back even to the

Prettiest babe that e'er I nursed.

Neither Juliet nor Romeo had rightly read their own hearts. He was sighing for a shadow—she fancied that she could subject her feelings to the will of others:

But no more deep will I endart mine eye,
Than your consent gives strength to make it fly.

The preparation for their first interview goes forward; Benvolio has persuaded Romeo to go to Capulet's feast. There is a slight pause in the action, but how gracefully is it filled up! Mercutio comes upon the scene, and is placed by the side of Romeo, to contrast with him, but also to harmonize. The poetry of Mercutio is that of fancy; the poetry of Romeo is that of imagination. The wit of Mercutio is the overflow of animal spirits, occasionally polluted, like a spring pure from the well-head, by the soil over which it passes; the wit of Romeo is somewhat artificial, and scarcely self-sustained—it is the unaccustomed play of the intellect when the passions "have come to the clenching point,"

but it is under control, it has no exuberance which, like the wit of Mercutio, admits the coloring of the sensual and the sarcastic.

The very first words of Romeo show the change that has come o'er him. He went into that "hall in Capulet's house" fearing

Some consequence yet hanging in the stars.

He had "a soul of lead"—he would be "a candle-holder and look on." But he has seen Juliet; and with what gorgeous images has that sight filled his imagination!

Oh, she doth teach the torches to burn bright!
Her beauty hangs upon the cheek of night
As a rich jewel in an Ethiop's ear.

We have now the poetry of passion bursting upon us in its purple light.

The lovers show the intensity of their abandonment to an overmastering will. "They see only themselves in the universe." That is the true moral of their fate. But, even under the direst calamity, they catch at the one joy which is left—the short meeting before the parting. And what a parting that is! Here again comes the triumph of the beautiful over the merely tragic. They are once more calm. Their love again breathes of all the sweet sights and sounds in a world of beauty. They are parting, but the almost happy Juliet says:

It is not yet near day:—
Believe me, love, it was the nightingale.

Romeo, who sees the danger of delay, is not deceived:

It was the lark, the herald of the morn.

Then what a burst of poetry follows!—

Night's candles are burnt out, and jocund day
Stands tiptoe on the misty mountains' tops.

Note the exquisite display of womanly tenderness in Juliet, which hurries from the forgetfulness of joy in her husband's presence to apprehension for his safety. After this scene we are almost content to think, as Romeo fancied he thought:

Come what sorrow can,
It cannot countervail the exchange of joy.

The sorrow does come upon poor Juliet with redoubled force. The absolute father, the unyielding mother, the treacherous nurse—all hurrying her into a loathed marriage—might drive one less resolved to the verge of madness. But from this moment her love has become heroism. She sees

No pity sitting in the clouds—

she rejects her nurse—she resolves to deceive her parents. This scene brings out her character in its strongest and most beautiful relief.

The final catastrophe comes. They have paid the penalty of the fierce hatreds that were engendered around them, and of their own precipitancy; but their misfortunes and their loves have healed the enmities of which they were the victims. The part of Juliet, it may be remarked, though one of the finest of all Shakespearean characters, is one of the most difficult



to act, and on it many young and aspiring actresses have been shipwrecked—women who would fain begin at the top of the histrionic ladder.

Othello.

In *Othello* is a strong Rembrandtesque picture, in contrast to the summer dawn, rich in varied hues of the composition above described. The Moor—under which name was originally meant a baptized Saracen of the northern coast of Africa—has been invested with qualities not common to the race from which he claims descent. We recognize in Othello something of the wild nature of that glowing zone which generates the most ravenous beasts of prey and the most deadly poisons, tamed only in appearance by the desire of fame, by foreign laws of honor and by nobler and milder manners. His jealousy is not the jealousy of the heart, which is compatible with the tenderest feeling and adoration of the beloved object; it is of that sensual kind which, in burning climes, has given birth to the disgraceful confinement of women and many other unnatural usages. A drop of this poison flows in his veins and sets his whole blood in the wildest ferment. The Moor seems noble, frank, confiding, grateful for the love shown him; and he is all this, and, moreover, a hero who spurns at danger, a worthy leader of an army, a faithful servant of the state; but the mere physical force of passion puts to flight in one moment all his acquired and merely habitual virtues, and gives the upper hand to the savage over the moral man. He suffers in his dual nature, in the

higher and the lower sphere into which his being was divided.

While the Moor bears the color of suspicion and deceit only on his visage, Iago is black within. He haunts Othello like his evil genius, and with his light, but therefore the more dangerous insinuations, he leaves him no rest; it is as if by means of an unfortunate affinity, this influence was by necessity more powerful over him than the voice of his good angel, Desdemona. A more artful villain than Iago was never portrayed; he spreads his nets with a skill which nothing can escape. The repugnance inspired by his aims becomes tolerable from the attention of the spectators being directed to his means; these furnish endless employment to the understanding. Cool, discontented and morose, arrogant where he dare be so, but humble and insinuating when it suits his purpose, he is a complete master in the art of dissimulation. Accessible only to selfish emotions, he is thoroughly skilled in rousing the passions of others, and of availing himself of every opening which they give him; he is as excellent an observer of men as anyone can be who is unacquainted with higher motives of action from his own experience; there is always some truth in his malicious observations on them. He does not merely pretend an obdurate incredulity as to the virtue of women; he actually entertains it; and this, too, falls in with his whole way of thinking, and makes him the more fit for the execution of his purpose. As in everything he sees merely the hateful side, he dissolves in the rudest manner the charm which the imagination casts over the relation between the two sexes; he does

so for the purpose of revolting Othello's senses, whose heart otherwise might easily have convinced him of Desdemona's innocence.

This may serve as an excuse for the numerous expressions in the speeches of Iago from which modesty shrinks. If Shakespeare had written in our days he would not, perhaps, have dared to hazard them; and yet this would certainly have greatly injured the truth of his picture. Desdemona is a sacrifice without blemish. She is not, it is true, a high ideal representation of sweetness and enthusiastic passion like Juliet; full of simplicity, softness and humility, and so innocent that she can hardly form to herself an idea of the possibility of infidelity; but she seems calculated to make the most yielding and tender of wives. The female propensity wholly to resign itself to a foreign destiny has led her into the only fault of her life—that of marrying without her father's consent. Her choice seems wrong, and yet she has been gained over to Othello by that which induces the female to honor in man her protector and guide—admiration of his determined heroism and compassion for the sufferings which he had undergone. With great art it is so contrived that, from the very circumstance that the possibility of a suspicion of her own purity of motive never once enters her mind, she is the less reserved in her solicitations for Cassio, and thereby does but heighten more and more the jealousy of Othello. To throw out still more clearly the angelic purity of Desdemona, Shakespeare has, in Emilia, associated with her a companion of doubtful virtue. From the sinful levity of this woman it is also conceivable

that she should not confess the abstraction of the handkerchief when Othello violently demands it back; this would otherwise be the circumstance in the whole piece the most difficult to justify. Cassio is portrayed exactly as he ought to be to excite suspicion without actual guilt, amiable and nobly disposed, but easily seduced. The public events of the first two acts show us Othello in his most glorious aspect, as the support of Venice and the terror of the Turks. They serve to withdraw the story from the mere domestic circle, just as this is done in *Romeo and Juliet* by the dissensions between the houses of Montague and Capulet. No eloquence is capable of painting the overwhelming force of the catastrophe in Othello—the presence of feelings which measure out in a moment the abysses of eternity.

If it had been within the compass of Shakespeare's scheme to have made Iago a supernatural incarnation of the principle of evil, he would not have drawn him very differently from what he is. In all essentials he is "only not quite devil." Iago bears a resemblance to the Mephistopheles of Goethe. Take away the supernatural power in Mephistopheles, and the sense of the supernatural power in Faust, and the actions of the human fiend and the real fiend are reduced to pretty much the same standard. It could not be otherwise. Goethe, to make the incarnation of the evil principle intelligible in its dealing with human affairs, could only paint what Shakespeare has painted, a being passionless, self-possessed, unsympathizing, skeptical of all truth and purity, intellectually gross and sensual, of a will uncontrolled by fear for himself or respect for others, the

abstract of the reasoning power in the highest state of activity, but without love, without veneration, without hope. Mephistopheles and Iago have this in common, also, that they each seek to destroy their victims, through their affections, and each is successful in the attempt.

Iago paints the Moor with bitter satire, as one "loving his own pride and purposes." He exhibits him lofty and magniloquent, using "a bombast circumstance;" and yet he is compelled to do justice to the Moor's high talent—

Another of his fathom they have none,
To lead their business.

The frankness and generosity of Othello, on the contrary, is a subject for his utter scorn. Here he has no sympathy with him:

The Moor is of a free and open nature,
That thinks men honest that but seem to be so;
And will as tenderly be led by the nose,
As asses are.

Again—

The Moor—howbeit that I endure him not—
Is of a constant, loving, noble nature.

It is his dependence upon this constant, loving, noble nature, it is upon Othello's freedom from all low suspicion, that Iago relies for his power to

Make the Moor thank me, love me, and reward me,
For making him egregiously an ass,
And practicing upon his peace and quiet
Even to madness.

2--Part II, Vol. XIV.

But let Othello speak for himself. Not vain, but proud; relying upon himself, his birth, his actions, he is calm at the prospect of any injury that Brabantio can do him. He is bold when he has to confront those who come as his enemies:

—I must be found;
My parts, my title, and my perfect soul
Shall manifest me richly.

When the old senator exclaims: "Down with him—thief!" how perfect is his self-command:

Keep up your bright swords, for the dew will rust them.

It was his forbearance and self-restraint, bottomed upon the most enthusiastic energy, that made him a hero.

The senate scene is the triumph of Othello's perfect simplicity and fearless enthusiasm. And then his affection for Desdemona. Before the assembled senators he puts on no show of violence, and unquestionably no affectation of warmth and tenderness:

She loved me for the dangers I had pass'd,
And I loved her that she did pity them.

The impressibility of Desdemona is her distinguishing characteristic. With this key, the tale of Othello's wooing is a most consistent one. The timid girl is brought into immediate contact with the earnest warrior. She hears of wonders most remote from her experience; antres and deserts, rocks and hills, in themselves marvels to an inhabitant of the city of the sea.

—Of most disastrous chances;
Of moving accidents by flood and field.

Then, in four lines, comes a little domestic picture, a perfect gem in its way:

But still the house affairs would draw her thence;
Which ever as she could with haste dispatch,
She'd come again, and with a greedy ear
Devour up my discourse.

But this impressibility, this exceeding sympathy arising out of the tenderness of her nature, is under the control of the most perfect purity. Iago does full justice to this purity, while he sees that her kindness of heart may be abused.

Othello was betrayed not only by his reliance on Iago's honesty but also by his confidence in Iago's wisdom:

This fellow's of exceeding honesty,
And knows all qualities, with a learned spirit,
Of human dealings.

The wisdom which belonged to Othello's enthusiastic temperament was his confidence in the truth and purity of the being with whom his life was bound up, and his general reliance upon the better part of human nature in his judgment of his friend. When this confidence was destroyed by the craft of his deadly enemy, his sustaining power was also destroyed; the balance of his sensitive temperament was lost; his enthusiasm became wild passion; his new belief in the dominion of goodness over the apparently pure and good shaped itself into outrage; his honor lent itself to schemes of cruelty and revenge. But even amidst the whirlwind of this

passion we now and then hear something which sounds as the softest echo of love and gentleness, as where he exclaims: "But yet the pity of it, Iago! Oh, Iago, the pity of it, Iago!" It is the contemplated murder of Desdemona which thus tears his heart, and we ask, with Coleridge, "As the curtain drops, which do we pity the most?"

Hamlet.

The first edition of *Hamlet* was published in 1603, from a previous sketch composed several years earlier, the second one following in 1604, under the title of "The Tragical Historie of Hamlet, Prince of Denmarke. By William Shakespeare. Newly imprinted and enlarged to almost as much againe as it was, according to the true and perfect coppie." In comparing the two editions we find a remarkable improvement in the command of language, with greater philosophic depth, and a wondrous insight into what is most hidden and obscure in men's characters and motives. The action is the same, as also is the order of the dialogues and soliloquies; but the latter are much elaborated, always with an accession of dramatic force. The following will serve as an instance:

Edition of 1603.

Hamlet.—My lord, 'tis not the sable suit I wear;
 No, nor the tears that still stand in my eyes,
 Nor the distracted 'havior in the visage,
 Nor altogether mixt with outward semblance,
 Is equal to the sorrow of my heart;
 Him have I lost I must of force forego,
 These, but the ornaments and suits of woe.



Edition of 1604.

Hamlet.—'Tis not alone my inky cloak, good mother,
Nor customary suits of solemn black,
Nor windy suspiration of forced breath;
No, nor the fruitful river in the eye,
Nor the dejected 'havior of the visage,
Together with all forms, modes, shows of grief,
That can denote me truly; these, indeed, seem,
For they are actions that a man might play;
But I have that within which passeth show;
These, but the trappings and the suits of woe.

In this, the profoundest of plays, is a tragedy of thought inspired by continual and never-satisfied meditation on human destiny and the dark perplexity of the events of this world, one calculated to call forth the very same meditation in the minds of the spectators. This enigmatical work resembles somewhat those irrational equations in which a fraction of unknown magnitude always remains, that will in no way admit of solution. Much has been said, much written, on this piece, and yet no critic who anew expresses himself on it will entirely coincide with his predecessors. What most astonishes us is the fact that with such hidden purposes, with a foundation laid in such unfathomable depth, the whole should, at a first view, exhibit an extremely popular appearance. The dread appearance of the ghost takes possession of the mind and the imagination almost at the very commencement; then the play within the play, in which, as in a glass, we see reflected the crime whose fruitlessly attempted punishment constitutes the subject-matter of the piece; the alarm with which it fills the king; Hamlet's pretended and Ophe-

lia's real madness; her death and burial; the meeting of Hamlet and Laertes at her grave; their combat and the grand termination; lastly, the appearance of the young hero Fortinbras, who, with warlike pomp, pays the last honors to an extinct family of kings; the interspersion of comic characteristic scenes with Polonius, the courtiers and the grave-diggers, which have each of them their signification—all this fills the stage with an animated and varied movement. The only point of view from which this piece might be judged to be less theatrical than other tragedies of Shakespeare, is that in the last scenes the main action either stands still or appears to retrograde. This, however, was inevitable, and lay in the nature of the subject. The whole is intended to show that a too close consideration, which exhausts all the relations and possible consequences of a deed, must cripple the power of action; as Hamlet himself expresses it:

And thus the native hue of resolution
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought;
And enterprises of great pith and moment,
With this regard, their currents turn awry,
And lose the name of action.

The mystery which surrounds the play centres in the character of Hamlet himself. He is of a highly cultivated mind, a prince of royal manners, endowed with the finest sense of propriety, susceptible of noble ambition, and open in the highest degree to an enthusiastic admiration of that excellence in others in which he himself is deficient. He acts the part of madness with un-

rivalled power, convincing the persons who are sent to examine into his supposed loss of reason merely by telling them unwelcome truths and rallying them with the most caustic wit. But in the resolutions which he so often embraces and always leaves unexecuted, his weakness is too apparent; he is not solely impelled by necessity to artifice and dissimulation, he has a natural inclination for crooked ways; he is a hypocrite toward himself; his far-fetched scruples are often mere pretexts to cover his want of determination—thoughts, as he says, which have

—but one part wisdom

And ever three parts coward.

He has been condemned both for his harshness in repulsing the love of Ophelia, which he himself had cherished, and for his insensibility at her death. But he is too much overwhelmed with his own sorrow to have any compassion to spare for others; besides, his outward indifference gives us by no means the measure of his internal perturbation. On the other hand, we evidently perceive in him a malicious joy, when he has succeeded in getting rid of his enemies, more through necessity and accident, which alone are able to impel him to quick and decisive measures, than by the merit of his own courage, as he himself confesses after the slaying of Polonius. Hamlet has no firm belief either in himself or in anything else. From expressions of religious confidence he passes over to skeptical doubts; he believes in the ghost of his father as long as he sees it, but as soon as it has disappeared, it appears to him almost in the light of a

deception. He has even gone so far as to say "there is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so;" with him the poet loses himself here in labyrinths of thought, in which neither end nor beginning is discoverable. The stars themselves, from the course of events, afford no answer to the question so urgently proposed to them. A voice from another world, commissioned, it would appear, by heaven, demands vengeance for a monstrous enormity, and the demand remains without effect; the criminals are at last punished, but, as it were, by an accidental blow, and not in the solemn way requisite to convey to the world a warning example of justice; irresolution, cunning treachery and impetuous rage hurry on to a common destruction; the less guilty and the innocent are equally involved in the general ruin. The destiny of humanity is here exhibited as a gigantic Sphinx, which threatens to precipitate into the abyss of skepticism all who are unable to solve her dread enigmas.

As one example of the many niceties of Shakespeare which have been generally misunderstood, may be mentioned the style in which the player's speech about Hecuba is conceived. It has been the subject of much controversy among commentators whether this was taken by Shakespeare from himself or from another, and whether, in the praise of the piece of which it is supposed to be a part, Hamlet was speaking seriously, or merely meant to ridicule the tragical bombast of his contemporaries. It seems never to have occurred to them that this speech must not be judged by itself, but in connection with the place where it is introduced. To

distinguish it in the play itself as dramatic poetry, it was necessary that it should rise above the dignified poetry of the former in the same proportion that theatrical elevation always soars above simple nature. Hence Shakespeare has composed the play in Hamlet altogether in sententious rhymes full of antitheses. But this solemn and measured tone did not suit a speech in which violent emotion ought to prevail, and the poet had no other expedient than the one of which he made choice—overcharging the pathos. Unquestionably the language of the speech in question is falsely emphatical; but this fault is so mixed up with true grandeur that a player practiced in artificially calling forth in himself the emotion he is imitating may certainly be carried away by it. Besides, it will hardly be believed that Shakespeare knew so little of his art as not to be aware that a tragedy in which there is a lengthy epic relation of a transaction that happened so long before as the destruction of Troy, could neither be dramatic nor theatrical.

There is something altogether indefinable and mysterious in the poet's delineation of this character—something wild and irregular in the circumstances with which the character is associated. We see that Hamlet is propelled rather than propelling. But why is this turn given to the delineation? We cannot exactly tell. Doubtless much of the very charm of the play is its mysteriousness. It awakes not only thoughts of the grand and the beautiful, but of the incomprehensible. Its obscurity constitutes a portion of its sublimity. This is the stage in which most minds are content to rest, and

perhaps better so, with regard to the comprehension of *Hamlet*.

The final appreciation of the *Hamlet* of Shakespeare belongs to the development of the critical faculty. Goethe, Coleridge, Schlegel, Lamb, Hazlitt, Mrs. Jameson and other writers out of number, some of the very highest order of excellence, have brought to the criticism and explanation of this play a most valuable fund of judgment, taste and æsthetical knowledge. To condense what is most deserving of remembrance in these admirable productions within due limits would be impossible. We must, therefore, place ourselves in the condition of one who has, however imperfectly, worked out in his own mind a comprehension of the idea of Shakespeare.

The opening of *Hamlet* is one of the most absorbing scenes in the Shakespearean drama. It produces its effect by the supernatural being brought into the most immediate contact with the real. The sentinels are prepared for the appearance of the ghost, Horatio being incredulous, but they are all surrounded with an atmosphere of common life. "Long live the king," "'Tis bitter cold," "Not a mouse stirring," and the familiar pleasantries of Horatio, exhibit to us minds under the ordinary state of human feeling. At the moment when the recollections of Bernardo arise into that imaginative power which belongs to the tale he is about to tell, the ghost appears. All that was doubtful in the narrative of the supernatural vision—what left upon Horatio's mind the impression only of a "thing"—because as real as the silence, the cold

and the midnight. The vision is then "most like the king"—

Such was the very armor he had on.

The ghost remains but an instant, and we are again among the realities of common life. When it reappears there is still a tinge of skepticism in the soldiers:

Shall I strike at it with my partisan?

But their incredulity is at once subdued, and a resolution is taken by Horatio upon the conviction that what he once held as a "fantasy" is a dreadful being, of whose existence there can be no doubt.

Let us impart what we have seen to-night
Unto young Hamlet: for, upon my life,
This spirit, dumb to us, will speak to him.

We have here, by anticipation, all the deep and inexplicable consequences of this vision laid upon young Hamlet; it is his destiny.

Here we need not stop to analyze the scenes and acts that follow, for of all Shakespeare's plays this is the most familiar, and it is also one on which most men have already formed their own opinion. It will be sufficient to dwell very briefly on a few of its most striking features, and first as to the question of Hamlet's madness. Before the appearance of the ghost his spirit has been wounded by a sudden blow—a father dead, a crown snatched from him, a mother disgracefully married. Thus he looks with a jaundiced eye on "all the

uses of this world," on the "unweeded garden" that he fain would leave to be possessed by "things rank and gross in nature." Yet he communes with himself in a tone which bespeaks the habitual refinement of his thoughts, and his words shape themselves into images that belong to a high and cultivated intellect. Then comes the dread vision, with its appalling revelation, which lays on him a responsibility greater than his nature can bear. The mental disturbance which it causes becomes apparent while he thinks aloud, almost as soon as the ghost has disappeared; but he is not mad either in the popular or in the physiological sense; it is merely the mental derangement of a noble, but not an heroic, nature, sinking beneath a burden which it cannot bear and must not cast away. Coleridge attributes what he considers Hamlet's assumed eccentricity, after the ghost scene, to "the disposition to escape from his own feelings of the overwhelming and supernatural by a wild transition to the ludicrous, a sort of cunning bravado, bordering on delirium." It is under the immediate influence of the disorder in his soul that he resolves to feign madness. With a mind horribly disturbed with thoughts beyond mortal reach he still believes that the habitual powers of his intellect can control this disturbance and even render it an instrument of his safety. It has been observed that if there be anything disproportioned in his mind, it seems to be this only—that intellect is in excess; it is too subtle; it is even ungovernable. It is in his own high and overwrought consciousness of intellect that he describes the perfect man, "in apprehension how like a god." Much

that requires elucidation in the play can be explained by this exceptional predominance of the intellectual faculty, and to this, perhaps, belongs the idea of pretending insanity as a cloak for his real designs.

Here begins the complexity of Hamlet's character, and in his new guise he is thus presented to us by Ophelia, then for the first time showing the preoccupation, which afterward appears in many of his sayings:

He took me by the wrist, and held me hard;
Then goes he to the length of all his arm;
And with his other hand thus o'er his brow,
He falls to such perusal of my face,
As he would draw it. Long stay'd he so;
At last,—a little shaking of mine arm,
And thrice his head thus waving up and down,
He raised a sigh so piteous and profound,
That it did seem to shatter all his bulk,
And end his being. That done, he lets me go;
And, with his head over his shoulder turned,
He seem'd to find his way without his eyes;
For out o' doors he went without their help,
And, to the last, bended their light on me.

In this was none of the "antic disposition" which Hamlet thought fit to put on; still less was it, as Polonius deemed, the "ecstasy of love" produced by Ophelia's coldness. It was the utterance, so far as it could be uttered, of his sense of the hard necessity that was upon him to go forth to a mortal struggle with evil powers and influences; to tear himself from all the soothing and delicious fancies that would arise out of his growing affection for the simple maid whom he treated so roughly. Under the pressure of his vow that the ghost's

injunction should "live within the volume of his brain, unmix'd with baser matter," all else in the world has become to him mean and unimportant. Love was now to him "a trivial fond record," and philosophy "the saws of books."

That the king and his courtiers considered Hamlet insane, and freely talked of his insanity, is of no significance, for this was merely the "antic disposition," and the sarcasm directed against them, in which he appeared to be merely wandering, was but to relieve the bitterness of his soul. They did not see through his disguise any more than did Polonius, who, while pronouncing him "far gone," yet could not help noticing "how pregnant his replies are." In truth, the old man was himself verging on imbecility, though he had not wit enough to become entirely crazy—a condition which presupposes the possession of brains.

In the scene with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Hamlet is natural enough; for with them, as his old school-fellows, he is perfectly at ease, and he is again the Hamlet they knew of old—the gentleman and the scholar. He even discloses to them a glimpse of the deep melancholy which weighs on his soul: "O God, I could be bounded in a nut-shell, and count myself a king of infinite space, were it not that I have bad dreams." He knows that his friends were sent to him as spies; but he suppresses his feelings, and bursts out into the majestic piece of rhetoric beginning, "What a piece of work is man!"—one that could only have been conceived by a being of the highest intellectual power, in the full possession of his faculties. In the scene with

the players, also, Hamlet is entirely himself. He has escaped for a moment from the one o'ermastering thought, but even here that thought follows him: "Dost thou hear me, old friend; can you play the murder of Gonzago?" Then comes the soliloquy, "Now I am alone," in which, as Charles Lamb expresses it, "the silent meditations with which his bosom is bursting are reduced to words for the sake of the reader." Hamlet's indecision is not due to want of courage, as appears in several instances—

My fate cries out,
And makes each petty artery in this body
As hardy as the Nemean lion's nerve.

But his will is subject to his higher faculties, and he sees no course clear enough to satisfy his understanding. He would have been greater had he been less great.

In his great soliloquy, "To be or not to be," he is interrupted by Ophelia in the midst of a most solemn train of thought. When she says to him—

My lord, I have remembrances of yours.

it is probable that his rude denial of having given Ophelia remembrances, and his "Ha, ha! are you honest?" with all the bitter words that follow, are meant to indicate the disturbance which is produced in his mind by the clashing of his love for her with the predominant thought which now makes all that belongs to his personal happiness worthless. His bitterness escapes in generalizations; it is not against Ophelia, but against her sex, that he exclaims. To that gentle

creature, the harshest thing he says is: "Be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as snow, thou shalt not escape calumny." Coleridge thinks that the harshness in Hamlet's manner is produced by his perceiving that Ophelia was acting a part toward him and that they were watched. Perhaps, as Lamb expresses it, these "tokens of an unhinged mind" are mixed "with a certain artifice, to alienate Ophelia by affected discourtesies, so to prepare her mind for the breaking off of that intercourse which can no longer find a place amid business so serious as that which he has to do." At any rate, the gentle and tender Ophelia is not outraged. Her pity only is excited; and, if the apparent rudeness of Hamlet requires a proper appreciation of his character to reconcile it with our admiration of him, Shakespeare has at this moment most adroitly presented to us that description of him which Goethe anticipated:

The courtier's, soldier's, scholar's, eye, tongue, sword,
The expectancy and rose of the fair state.

Hamlet recovers a temporary tranquillity. He has something to do, and that something is connected with his great business. He has to prepare the players to speak his speech. Those who look upon the surface only may think these directions out of place; but nothing can really be more appropriate than that such rules of art, so just, so universal and so complete should be put by Shakespeare into the mouth of him who had preëminently "the scholar's tongue." The satisfaction he takes in the device, the hopes which he has that his

doubts may be resolved lend a real elevation to his spirits, which may pass for his feigned madness. He utters whatever comes uppermost; and the freedoms which he takes with Ophelia, while they are equally remote from bitterness or harshness, are such as in Shakespeare's age would not offend pure ears.

The test is applied; the king is "frighted with false fire," and the elation of Hamlet's mind is at its height. Then comes the climax—"Now could I drink hot blood." Yet he is not raving, and in the scene with the queen he vindicates his own sanity:

It is not madness
That I have uttered: bring me to the test,
And I the matter will re-word; which madness
Would gambol from.

The question may be asked, why is it, when we think upon the fate of the poor stricken Ophelia, that we never reproach Hamlet? We are certain that it was no "trifling of his favor" that broke her heart; we are assured that his seeming harshness did not sink deep into her spirit; we believe that he loved her more than "forty thousand brothers;" and yet she certainly perished through Hamlet and his actions. But we blame him not, for her destiny was involved in his. Says a writer in *Blackwood's Magazine*: "Soon as we connect her destiny with Hamlet we know that darkness is to overshadow her, and that sadness and sorrow will step in between her and the ghost-haunted avenger of his father's murder. Soon as our pity is excited for her it continues gradually to deepen, and, when she ap-

pears in her madness, we are as deeply moved as when we hear of her death. Perhaps the description of that catastrophe by the queen is poetical rather than dramatic; but its exquisite beauty prevails, and Ophelia, dying and dead, is still the same Ophelia that first won our love. Perhaps the very forgetfulness of her, throughout the remainder of the play, leaves the soul at full liberty to dream of the departed. She has passed away from the earth like a beautiful dream.

Garrick omitted the grave-diggers. He had the terror of Voltaire before his eyes. The English audiences compelled their restoration, for there was something in the scene that brought Hamlet home to the humblest in the large reach of his universal philosophy. The conversation of the clowns before he comes upon the scene is, indeed, pleasantry mixed with sarcasm; but, the moment that Hamlet opens his lips, the meditative richness of his mind is poured out upon us, and he grapples with the most familiar and yet the deepest thoughts of human nature, in a style that is sublime from its simplicity. The catastrophe is in perfect accord with the ultimate prostration of his mind. It is the result of an accident produced we know not how. The general massacre on which the curtain falls has been the subject of much adverse comment; but Shakespeare does nothing without excellent reasons.

Macbeth.

If *Hamlet* is the grandest of Shakespeare's plays, *Macbeth* is from a tragic standpoint the most sublime

and the most impressive as an acting play. Nothing so terrible has been written since the *Eumenides* of Æschylus, and nothing in dramatic literature—not even the slaying of Agamemnon—is depicted with such awesome intensity as the murder of Duncan. The witches are not, it is true, the divine Eumenides; they are not intended to be so; they are ignoble and vulgar instruments of hell, and the German poet who transformed them into a mixture of fates, furies and enchantresses, clothing them with tragic dignity, very ill understood their meaning.

Whether the age of Shakespeare still believed in ghosts and witches is a matter of perfect indifference for the justification of the use which, in *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*, he has made of preëxisting traditions. No superstition can be widely diffused without having a foundation in human nature; on this the poet builds; he calls up from their hidden abysses that dread of the unknown, that presage of a dark side of nature and a world of spirits, which philosophy now imagines it has altogether exploded.

These repulsive hags, from which the imagination shrinks, are here emblems of the hostile powers which operate in nature; and the repugnance of our senses is outweighed by the mental horror. With one another they discourse like women of the very lowest class; for this was the class to which they were ordinarily supposed to belong; when, however, they address Macbeth, they assume a loftier tone; their predictions, which they either themselves pronounce or allow their apparitions to deliver, have all the obscure brevity, the majestic

solemnity of oracles. They are governed by an invisible spirit, or the operation of such great and dreadful events would be above their sphere. With what intent did Shakespeare assign the same place to them in his play which they occupy in the history of Macbeth as related in the old chronicles? A monstrous crime is committed; Duncan, a venerable old man, and the best of kings, is, in defenseless sleep, under the hospital's roof, murdered by his subject, whom he has loaded with honors and rewards. Natural motives alone seem inadequate, or the perpetrator must have been portrayed as a hardened villain. Shakespeare wished to exhibit a more sublime picture—an ambitious but noble hero, yielding to a deep-laid hellish temptation, and in whom all the crimes to which, in order to secure the fruits of his first crime, he is impelled by necessity, cannot altogether eradicate the stamp of native heroism. He has, therefore, given a threefold division to the guilt of that crime. The first idea comes from beings whose whole activity is guided by a lust of wickedness. The weird sisters surprise Macbeth in the moment of the intoxication of victory, when his love of glory has been gratified; they cheat his eyes by exhibiting to him as the work of fate what in reality can only be accomplished by his own deed, and gain credence for all their words by the immediate fulfilment of the first prediction.

The opportunity of murdering the king immediately offers; the wife of Macbeth conjures him not to let it slip; she urges him on with a fiery eloquence, which has at command all those sophisms that serve to throw a false splendor over crime. Little more than the mere

execution falls to the share of Macbeth; he is driven into it, as it were, in a tumult of fascination. Repentance immediately follows, nay, even precedes the deed, and the stings of conscience leave him rest neither night nor day. But he is now fairly entangled in the snares of hell. That same Macbeth, who once as a warrior could spurn at death, now that he dreads the prospect of the life to come, clings with growing anxiety to his earthly existence the more miserable it becomes, and pitilessly removes out of the way whatever to his dark and suspicious mind seems to threaten danger. However much we may abhor his actions, we cannot altogether refuse to compassionate the state of his mind; we lament the ruin of so many noble qualities, and even in his last defense we are compelled to admire the struggle of a brave will with a cowardly conscience.

Lady Macbeth, who of all the human participators in the king's murder is the most guilty, is thrown by the terrors of her conscience into a state of incurable bodily and mental disease; she dies, unlamented even by her husband. Macbeth is still found worthy to die the death of a hero on the field of battle. The noble Macduff is allowed the satisfaction of saving his country by punishing with his own hand the tyrant who had murdered his wife and children. Banquo, by an early death, atones for his ambitious curiosity to know his glorious descendants, as he thereby has roused Macbeth's jealousy; but he preserves his mind pure from the evil suggestions of the witches; his name is blessed in his race, destined to enjoy for a long succession of ages that royal dignity which Macbeth could only hold for his own life.

In the progress of the action, this play is the reverse of *Hamlet*; it strides forward with amazing rapidity from the first catastrophe to the last. The precise duration of the action cannot be ascertained—years, perhaps, according to the story—but to the imagination the most crowded time appears always the shortest. Here we can hardly conceive how so much could have been compressed into so narrow a space, and not merely external events, for the very inmost recesses in the minds of the dramatic personages are laid open to us. It is as if the drags were taken from the wheels of time, and they rolled along without interruption in their descent.

The play is also of historic interest, its incidents dating back to the days of Edward the Confessor. There were sufficient materials for the drama in Holinshed's *History of Scotland*; but with these Shakespeare has blended another story—that of the murder of King Duff by Donwald and his wife in Donwald's castle. "The king got him into his privy chamber, only with two of his chamberlains, who, having brought him to bed, came forth again, and then fell to banqueting with Donwald and his wife, who had prepared divers delicate dishes and sundry sorts of drinks for their supper, whereat they sat up so long, till they had charged their stomachs with such full gorges, that their heads no sooner got to the pillow but asleep they were so fast that a man might have removed the chamber over them sooner than to have awaked them out of their drunken sleep.

"Then Donwald, though he abhorred the act greatly in heart, yet through instigation of his wife he called four of his servants unto him, whom he had made privy

to his wicked intent before, and framed to his purpose with large gifts, and now declaring unto them after what sort they should work the feat, they gladly obeyed his instructions, and speedily going about the murder, they enter the chamber in which the king lay a little before cock's crow, where they secretly cut his throat as he lay sleeping, without any bustling at all; and immediately by a postern gate they carried forth the dead body into the fields."

King Lear.

As in *Macbeth* terror reaches its utmost height, in *King Lear* the sense of compassion is exhausted. The principal characters here are not these who act, but those who suffer. We have not in this, as in most tragedies, the picture of a calamity in which the sudden blows of fate seem still to honor the head which they strike, and where the loss is always accompanied by some flattering consolation in the memory of the former possession; but a fall from the highest elevation into the deepest abyss of misery, where humanity is stripped of all external and internal advantages, and given up a prey to naked helplessness. The threefold dignity of a king, an old man, and a father, is dishonored by the cruel ingratitude of his unnatural daughters; the old king, who out of a foolish tenderness has given away everything, is driven out into the world a homeless beggar; the childish imbecility to which he was fast advancing changes into the wildest insanity, and when he is rescued from the destitution to which he was abandoned, it is too late. The kind consolations of

filial care and attention and of true friendship are now lost on him; his bodily and mental powers are destroyed beyond hope of recovery, and all that now remains to him of life is the capability of loving and suffering beyond measure. What a picture we have in the meeting of Lear and Edgar in a tempestuous night and in a wretched hovel! The youthful Edgar has, by the wicked arts of his brother, and through his father's blindness, fallen, as did Lear, from the rank to which his birth entitled him; and, as the only means of escaping further persecution, is reduced to the disguise of a beggar tormented by evil spirits. The king's fool, notwithstanding the voluntary degradation which is implied in his condition, is, after Kent, Lear's most faithful associate, the wisest counsellor. This good-hearted fool clothes reason with the livery of his motley garb; the high-born beggar acts the part of insanity; and both, were they even in reality what they seem, would still be enviable in comparison with the king, who feels that the violence of his grief threatens to overpower his reason. The meeting of Edgar with the blinded Gloster is equally pathetic; nothing can be more affecting than to see the ejected son become the father's guide, and the good angel, who, under the disguise of insanity, saves him by an ingenious and pious fraud from the horror and despair of self-murder.

The story of Lear and his daughters was left by Shakespcare as he found it in a fabulous tradition, with all the features characteristic of the simplicity of old times. But in that tradition there is not the slightest trace of the story of Gloster and his sons, which was

derived by Shakespeare from another source. The incorporation of the two stories has been censured as destructive of the unity of action. But whatever contributes to the intrigue of the *dénouement* must always possess unity. And with what ingenuity and skill are the two main parts of the composition dovetailed into one another! The pity felt by Gloster for the fate of Lear becomes the means whereby his son Edmund effects his complete destruction, and affords the out-cast Edgar an opportunity of being the savior of his father. On the other hand, Edmund is active in the cause of Regan and Goneril, and the criminal passion which they both entertain for him induces them to execute justice on each other and on themselves. The laws of the drama have therefore been sufficiently complied with, and it is the very combination which constitutes the beauty of the work.

The two cases resemble each other in the main; an infatuated father is blind toward his well-disposed child, and the unnatural children, whom he prefers, requite him by the ruin of his happiness. But all the circumstances are so different that the stories, while they each make a correspondent impression on the heart, form a complete contrast for the imagination. Were Lear alone to suffer from his daughters, the impression would be limited to the powerful compassion felt by us for his private misfortune. But two such unheard-of examples taking place at the same time have the appearance of a great commotion in the moral world; the picture becomes gigantic and fills us with such alarm as we should entertain at the idea that the heavenly

bodies might one day fall from their orbits. To save in some degree the honor of human nature, Shakespeare never wishes his spectators to forget that the story takes place in a dreary and barbarous age; he lays particular stress on the circumstance that the Britons of that day were still heathens, although he has not made all the remaining circumstances to coincide learnedly with the time which he has chosen.

From this point of view we must judge of many coarsenesses in expression and manners; for instance, the immodest manner in which Gloster acknowledged his bastard, Kent's quarrel with the steward, and more especially the cruelty personally inflicted on Gloster by the duke of Cornwall. Even the virtue of the honest Kent bears the stamp of an iron age, in which the good and the bad display the same uncontrollable energy. Great qualities have not been superfluously assigned to the king; the poet could command our sympathy for his situation, without concealing what he had done to bring himself into it. Lear is choleric, overbearing and almost childish from age, when he drives out his youngest daughter because she will not join in the hypocritical exaggerations of her sisters. But he has a warm and affectionate heart, which is susceptible of the most fervent gratitude; and even rays of a high and kingly disposition burst forth from the eclipse of his understanding. Cordelia, with her heavenly beauty of soul, reminds us of Antigone. In the entire play little more than a hundred lines are assigned to her; yet, throughout the five acts, we can never forget her, and at the close she lingers in our recollection as if we had seen

some being more beautiful and purer than a thing of earth.

After surviving so many sufferings, Lear can only die, and what more truly tragic end for him than to die from grief for the death of Cordelia? According to Shakespeare's plan, the guilty, it is true, are all punished, for wickedness destroys itself; but the virtues that would bring help and succor are either too late or are overmatched by the cunning activity of malice.

The legend of Lear had unquestionably been dramatized before Shakespeare produced his tragedy. "The true Chronicle History of King Leir and his three Daughters, Gonorill, Ragan and Cordelia, as it hath been divers and sundry times lately acted," was printed, probably for the first time, in 1605; but there can be no doubt that it belongs to a period some ten or perhaps twenty years earlier. In 1594 an entry was made at Stationers' hall, of "The moste famous Chronicle Hystorie of Leire King of England, and his Three Daughters." Shakespeare's story of Lear is taken from Holinshead's account of the legend, one dated back to the time when Joas reigned over Judah, or, according to Geoffrey of Monmouth's, to the days of Isaiah and Hosea. A garbled version of the play as written by the poet was prepared by one Nahum Tate, who, not understanding the art of Shakespeare and having no dramatic art himself, thought to adopt the original to the popular taste. For over a century this abortion held possession of the stage, until Macready restored to us the work of the great master, since cleansed from its remaining impurities by able commentators.

In tragical pathos, in dramatic force, in grandeur of sentiment and diction, Lear has no superior in all the wide range of the world's drama. The language often rises to or exceeds, if possible, the sublimity of Æschylus, and the tragedy has the further advantage of dealing with human beings, human passions, and human frailties, and not with the affairs of gods and demi-gods. The modern play-goer does not greatly concern himself with the deeds and thoughts of the powers supernal, and if he can see human beings set forth on the stage, with their virtues and infirmities, would willingly leave the gods to manage their own affairs.

II.

Shakespeare's Contemporaries and Successors.

The national temperament and limited culture of the English people in the Elizabethan era afforded little inducement for dramatists to copy either classic models or the light productions of the Italian and French schools. In the pastoral drama and the court mask, however, a number of them found welcome opportunities for exercising their lyrical gifts and inventive powers. Ben Jonson, Fletcher, Daniel and others sought to rival Tasso and Guarini, the first-named coming nearest to nationalizing a foreign growth by the fresh simplicity of his treatment.

The Mask.

The mask was an elastic species of composition, mixing in varying proportion its constituent elements of declamation and dialogue, music and dancing, decoration and scenery. In its least elaborate literary form, which externally was the most elaborate, it closely approached the pageant; in other instances the distinctness of its characters or the fullness of the action intro-

duced into its schemes brought it nearer to the regular drama. A frequent ornament of Queen Elizabeth's progresses, it was further cultivated in the reign of James I, and in that of his successor outshone, by the favor it enjoyed with court and nobility, the attractions of the regular drama itself. Most of the later Elizabethan dramatists contributed to this species, while Shakespeare only incidentally in the course of his plays expended on it the resources of his fancy. By far the most successful writer of masks was Ben Jonson, of whose numerous compositions of this kind many hold a permanent place in poetic literature.

The *Microcosmus* of Nabbes, printed in 1637, which closely resembles a Morality play, seems to have been the first mask brought upon the public stage. It was the performance of a mask by Queen Henrietta Maria and her ladies at Whitehall which some years previously had been thought to have supplied to the invective of *Histrion Mastix* against the stage the occasion for disloyal innuendo; and it was for the performance of a mask in a great nobleman's castle that Milton later composed one of the loftiest and most beautiful of poems. *Comus* has been condemned as a drama; but dramatic qualities are not essential to the species. The mask ultimately merged into the opera, or continued a humble life of its own as a pastime.

Dramatists After Shakespeare.

Among Shakespeare's contemporaries and successors there is but one who, by force of genius not less than

by the circumstances of his literary career, stands in a position of undisputed primacy among his fellows, and that was Ben Jonson. To him in his latter days a whole generation of younger writers did homage as to their veteran chief, and thus he alone can be termed the founder of a school or family of dramatists. Yet his preëminence did not extend to both branches of the drama. In tragedy he fell short of the highest standard; for the weight of his learning lay too heavily upon him. Such as they are, however, his tragic works stand almost, though not quite, alone in this period as examples of sustained effort in historic tragedy proper. Chapman treated stirring themes, more especially from modern French history, always with vigor and at times with genuine effectiveness; but though rich in beauties of detail he failed in the supreme art of developing a character by means of the action. Others, including Ford, Dekker and Heywood, attempted to write tragedies and chronicle histories on the *grand plane*, but fell short of their aim.

Tragedy.

The tragedies and comedies of this era show an astonishing exuberance, and in mere externals of theme range from Byzantium to ancient Britain and from the Cæsars to the tyrants of the Renaissance. The sources from which subjects were derived had been constantly on the increase. Besides Italian, Spanish and French fiction, original or translated, besides British legend in its Romance dress, and English fiction in its humbler or in its more ambitious and artificial forms,

the contemporary foreign drama, especially the Spanish, offered abundant opportunities. To the English, as to the French and Italian drama of both this and the following century, the prolific dramatists clustered round Lopé de Vega and Calderon supplied a whole arsenal of plots, incidents and situations—among others to Middleton, to Webster and especially to Beaumont and Fletcher. And in addition to these materials, a new field of resources was at hand, since the dramatist had begun to regard events and episodes of English domestic life as fit subjects for tragic treatment. Domestic tragedy of this description was indeed no novelty on the French stage; Shakespeare himself may have touched, with his master-hand more than one effort of this kind; but Heywood must be regarded as the first who achieved anything remarkable in this class, to which some of the plays of Dekker, Middleton and others more or less belong.

Yet, in contrast with this wide variety of sources and apparent variety of themes, the number of motives employed in the tragic drama of this period was comparatively small and limited. Notwithstanding the diversity of subjects among such writers as Marston, Webster, Fletcher, Ford and Shirley, an impression of sameness is left upon us by a connected perusal of their works. Political ambition, conjugal jealousy, absolute female devotion, unbridled masculine passion—such are the motives which constantly recur in the later Elizabethan drama. And this impression is heightened by the want of moderation, by the excess of passion, which these dramatists so habitually ex-

hibit in the treatment of their favorite themes. All the tragic poets of this period are not equally amenable to this charge; in Webster, master as he is of the effects of the horrible, and in Ford, seductive in his sweetness, the monotony of exaggerated passion is broken by those marvellous sudden and subtle touches through which their tragic genius creates its most thrilling effects. Nor will the tendency to excess of passion which Beaumont and Fletcher undoubtedly exhibit be confounded with their distinctive power of sustaining tenderly pathetic characters and situations in a degree unequalled by any of their contemporaries—a power seconded by a beauty of diction and softness of versification which for a time raised them to the highest pinnacle of popularity, and which entitles them to their enduring preëminence. In their morals Beaumont and Fletcher are not above the level of their age. The manliness of sentiment which ennobles the rhetorical genius of Massinger, and the gift of poetic illustration which entitles Shirley to be remembered as something besides the latest and most fertile of this group of dramatists, have less direct bearing upon the general character of the tragic art of the period.

Comedy.

In comedy, on the other hand, the genius and insight of Jonson pointed the way to a steady and legitimate advance. His theory of “Humours,” which found the most palpable expression in two of his earliest plays, shows the paramount importance in the comic drama of

the creation of distinctive human types. In the actual creation of these it was impossible that Jonson should excel Shakespeare; but in the consciousness with which he recognized and indicated the highest sphere of a comic dramatist's labors, he rendered to the drama a direct service which Shakespeare had left unperformed. By the rest of his contemporaries and his successors, some of whom were content avowedly to follow in his footsteps, Jonson was only occasionally rivalled in individual instances of comic creations; in the entirety of its achievements his genius as a comic dramatist remained unapproached. The favorite types of Jonsonian comedy, to which Dekker, Marston and Chapman had, though to no large extent, added others of their own, were elaborated with incessant zeal and remarkable effect by their contemporaries and successors. It was after a very different fashion from that in which the Roman comedians reiterated the ordinary types of the New Attic comedy, that the inexhaustible verve of Middleton, the buoyant productivity of Fletcher, the observant humor of Field and the artistic versatility of Shirley mirrored in innumerable pictures of contemporary life the undying follies and foibles of mankind. In the comedy of manners more than one of these surpassed the old master, especially in a lightness which did not impair their sureness of touch, while in the construction of plots the access of abundant new materials, and the greater elasticity in treatment which is the result of accumulated experience, enabled them to maintain a steady progress. Thus the comic drama of England, from Jonson to Shirley, is unsurpassed as a comedy of

manners, while as a comedy of character it at least defies comparison with any other national growth preceding or coëval with it. Though the younger generation was unequal in originality or force to its predecessors, yet so little exhausted was the vitality of the species that its traditions survived the interregnum of the Revolution and connected themselves in some measure with later growths of English comedy.

Ben Jonson found in Shakespeare a ready encourager of his talents. His first piece, imperfect in many respects, *Every Man in His Humor*, was by Shakespeare's intervention brought out on the stage; *Sejanus* was even retouched by him, and in both he undertook a principal character. This hospitable treatment on the part of so great a man met with an ungrateful return. Jonson assumed a superiority over Shakespeare on account of his school learning, the only point in which he really had an advantage; he made sarcastic allusions in his prologues and plays to many exquisite flights of poetic fancy, as contrary to true taste. Jonson was lacking in this soul quality, though his literary merits are high and various.

Sejanus and Catiline.

For one who incessantly preached the imitation of the ancients Jonson's tragedies utterly fall short of the Greek standard. In the historical elaboration given to these plays unity of time and place were entirely out of the question, and both are crowded with a multitude of secondary persons, such as are never to be found in

the classic drama. In *Catiline* he follows in the main the story of the conspiracy as related by Sallust. It was probably due in part to his enormous wealth that the latter was accepted as the authority on this famous episode. Among the numerous buildings recently discovered in the spacious grounds known as the gardens of Sallust is his former palace, its third floor level with the top of the Quirinal hill, near the line of the Servian wall.

Jonson's Comedies.

Jonson soon discovered that his talents were far better suited to comedy, and especially to the comedy of character. His characterization, however, is more marked with serious satire than playful ridicule; the later Roman satirists, rather than the comic authors, were his models. Nature had denied him that light and easy raillery which plays harmlessly round everything and which seems to be the mere effusion of gaiety, but which is so much the more philosophic, as it is not the vehicle of any definite doctrine. He set himself to exhibit real life with a minute accuracy. There is more of a spirit of observation than of fancy in the comic inventions of Jonson. Captain Bobadil, in *Every Man in His Humor*, a beggarly and cowardly adventurer, who passes himself off with young and simple people for a Hector, notwithstanding the change of manners, still remains a model in his way, and he has been imitated by English writers of comedy in after times. He has seldom planned his scenes so successfully as

EVERY MAN IN HIS HUMOR

After an original painting by F. R. Whitcside



FRANK LEE WHITEHEAD
1905



in this piece, where the jealous merchant is called off on important business, when his wife is in expectation of a visit of which he is suspicious, and when he is anxious to station his servant as a sentinel without, however, confiding his secret to him, because, above all things, he dreads the discovery of his own jealousy. This scene is a masterpiece, and if Jonson had always done as well, he would have ranked among the first of comic writers. Shakespeare is said to have played the part of Old Knowell. In so far as plot is concerned, the greatest praise is merited by *Volpone*, *The Alchemist* and *Epicæne, or the Silent Woman*. In *Volpone* Jonson for once has entered into Italian manners, without, however, taking an ideal view of them.

His powers as a dramatist were at their height during the earlier half of the reign of James I, and by the year 1616 he had produced nearly all the plays which are worthy of his genius. In that year a modest pension of a hundred marks a year was conferred upon him, and possibly this token of royal favor may have encouraged him to the publication of the first volume of the folio collected edition of his works. Jonson had other patrons more bountiful than the crown, and in 1613 had travelled to France as governor, or tutor, to the eldest son of Sir Walter Raleigh, then a state prisoner in the Tower. He continued to produce masks and entertainments when called upon; but he was attracted by other literary pursuits, and had already accomplished enough to furnish plentiful materials for retrospective discourse over pipe or cup. He was entitled to lord it at the Mermaid, where his quick antagonist in earlier wit combats no

longer appeared, even on a visit from his comfortable retreat at Stratford. On the other hand, Ben carried his town habits into Warwickshire, where it is said that he and Drayton made Shakespeare drink so hard with them as to cause the fever of which the latter died. The story is doubted, although it rests on the authority of the parish parson. We may picture Jonson as presiding at the Mermaid, where he ruled the roost among the younger authors, whose pride it was to be "sealed of the tribe of Ben," and by the avowal of grave writers, old or young, not one of them would have ventured to dispute his preëminence in the national literature. Nor was he to the last unconscious of the claims upon him which his position brought with it. When death came upon him, on August 6, 1637, he left behind him an unfinished work of great beauty, the pastoral drama of *The Sad Shepherd*. For forty years, he said in the prologue, "he had feasted the public; at first he could scarce hit its taste, but patience had at last enabled it to identify itself with the working of his pen."

Beaumont and Fletcher.

Richard, father of the dramatist, John Fletcher, was bishop of Bristol, Worcester, and later of London. John was born in 1579. Francis Beaumont was son of Sir Francis, judge of the Common Pleas Court. At twenty-two Beaumont prefixed to the masterpiece of Ben Jonson some noticeable verses in honor of his "dear friend" the author, and in the same year—1607—appeared the anonymous comedy of *The Woman-*

Hater, usually assigned to Fletcher alone. As the latter also prefixed to the edition of *Volpone* a copy of commendatory verses, we may presume that their common admiration for a common friend was among the earliest and strongest influences which drew together the two great poets whose names were thenceforward to be forever indivisible. Whatever may have been their respective situations when, either by happy chance or, as Dyce suggests, by the good offices of Jonson, they were first brought together, their intimacy soon became so much closer than that of ordinary brothers that the household which they shared as bachelors was conducted on thoroughly communistic principles. Soon after this union the twin stars of the stage rose visibly together for the first time. *Philaster*, the most beautiful, though not the loftiest of tragic plays that we owe to the comrades or the successors of Shakespeare, has always been regarded as the first-born issue of their common genius.

Thierry and Theodoret.

This tragedy has generally been dated earlier and assigned to Fletcher alone; but we can be sure neither of the early date nor of the single authorship. The main body of the play, comprising both the great scenes which throw out into full and final relief the character of either heroine for good or evil, bears throughout the unmistakable image and superscription of Fletcher; yet there are parts which for gravity and steady strength of style, for reserve and temperance of effect, would seem

to suggest the collaboration of a calmer and more patient hand; and these suggest rather the touch of Massinger than of Beaumont. Hardly eight years of toil and triumph, of joys and glorious life were spared by destiny to the younger poet between the date assigned to the first revelation of his genius in *Philaster* and that which marks the end of all his labors. On the 6th of March, 1616, Francis Beaumont died, according to Jonson and tradition, ere he was thirty years of age, and if we may trust the evidence of friends, he died of his own genius and fiery overwork of brain. The spring of 1616, we may note in passing, was the darkest that ever dawned upon the literary world; for, just forty-eight days afterward, it witnessed, on the 23d of April, the removal from earth of the mightiest genius that ever portrayed humanity. Thus less than seven weeks divided the death-days of Beaumont and Shakespeare. Some three years earlier, by Dyce's estimate, when about the age of twenty-eight, Beaumont had married Ursula, co-heiress to Henry Isley of Sundridge in Kent, by whom he left two daughters, one of them posthumous. Fletcher survived his friend nine years and five months; he died in the great plague of 1625, and was buried in St. Saviour's, Southwark, not, as we might have wished, beside his younger fellow in fame.

The plays collected under both names amount to upward of fifty, and of this number it is probable that the half must be considered as the work of Fletcher alone. Beaumont and Fletcher's works did not make their appearance until a short time after the death of the latter; the publishers have not given themselves the trouble to

distinguish critically the share which belonged to each, and still less do they afford us any information respecting the diversity of their talents. Some of their contemporaries have attributed boldness of imagination to Fletcher, and a mature judgment to his friend; the former, according to their opinion, was the inventive genius; the latter, the directing and moderating critic; but, as we shall see, Beaumont was something far more than this. It is now impossible to distinguish with certainty the writings of each, nor would the knowledge repay the labor. From some allusions in the way of parody, we may conclude that they entertained no very extravagant admiration of their great predecessor; from whom, nevertheless, they both learned much, and unquestionably borrowed many of their thoughts. In the whole form of their plays they followed his example, regardless of the different principles of Ben Jonson and of the imitations of the ancients. Like Shakespeare, they drew from novels and romances; they combined pathetic and burlesque scenes in the same play, and, by the concatenation of incidents, endeavored to excite the impression of the extraordinary and the wonderful. Their first object was effect, which the great artist can hardly fail of attaining, if he is determined above all things to satisfy himself. They were not players, like most of their predecessors, but they lived in the neighborhood of the theatre, were in constant intercourse with it, and possessed a perfect understanding of theatrical matters. They were also thoroughly acquainted with the people for whom they wrote; but they found it more convenient to lower themselves to

the tastes of the public than to follow the example of Shakespeare, who elevated the public to his own level. They lived in a vigorous age, which more readily pardoned extravagances of every description than feebleness and frigidity. They therefore never allowed themselves to be constrained by moral considerations. They are least successful in their tragic attempts, because their feeling is not sufficiently drawn from the depths of human nature, and because they bestowed too little attention on the general consideration of human destinies; they succeed much better in comedy, and in those serious and pathetic pictures which occupy a middle place betwixt comedy and tragedy.

Immorality.

The morality of these writers will not bear any close scrutiny. Not that they failed in strong colors to contrast greatness of soul and goodness with baseness and wickedness, or did not usually conclude with the disgrace and punishment of the latter, but an ostentatious generosity is often favorably exhibited in contrast with duty and justice. Everything good and excellent in their pictures arises more from transient ebullition than fixed principle; they seem to place the virtues in the blood, and close beside them impulses of merely a selfish and instinctive nature hold up their heads, as if they were of nobler origin. There is an incurably vulgar side of human nature, which, when he cannot help but show it, the writer should never handle without delicacy; instead of this, Beau-

mont and Fletcher throw no veil whatever over nature; they express everything bluntly in words; they make the spectator the unwilling confidant of all that purer minds endeavor to hide even from themselves. The indecencies in which these poets indulged go beyond conception. Licentiousness of language is the least evil; many scenes, nay, even whole plots, are so contrived that the very idea, not to mention the beholding of them, is a shock to modesty.

The Knight of the Burning Pestle.

The Knight of the Burning Pestle, by Beaumont and Fletcher—given in this volume—is an incomparable work and singular in its kind. It is a parody of the chivalry romances; the thought is borrowed from *Don Quixote*, but the imitation is handled with freedom, and so particularly applied to Spenser's *Faerie Queen* that it may pass for a second invention. But the novelty of the piece consists in the combination of a chimerical abuse of poetry with the incapacity to comprehend any fable, and the dramatic form more particularly. A grocer and his wife come as spectators to the theatre; they are discontented with the piece which has just been announced; they demand a play in honor of the corporation, and Ralph, their apprentice, is to act a principal part in it. Their humor is complied with; but still they are not satisfied, make their remarks on everything, and incessantly address themselves to the players. Ben Jonson had already exhibited imaginary spectators, but they were either supporters or censurers of the poet's views,

and were used to advance his cause. But the grocer and his wife represent a whole genus, namely, those prosaic spectators, who are destitute of all feeling for art. For them there is no illusion; the subject represented has all the effect of reality; they accordingly resign themselves to the impression of each moment and take part for or against the persons of the drama. For them Ralph, however heroically and chivalrously he may conduct himself, is always Ralph their apprentice; and in the whim of the moment they take upon them to demand scenes which are quite inconsistent with the plan of the piece that has been commenced. In short, the views and demands with which poets are often oppressed by a prosaic public are very cleverly and amusingly personified in these caricatures of spectators, as, without a particle of appreciation for real dramatic action, they watch the apprentice-knight through his strange and adventurous career.

The Faithful Shepherdess.

The Faithful Shepherdess, a pastoral, is highly extolled by some English critics, as it is without doubt finished with great care, in rhymed and partly in lyrical verses. Fletcher wished also to be classical for once, and so did violence to his natural talent. Perhaps he had the intention of surpassing Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream*; but the composition which he has ushered into the world is as heavy as that of the other was easy and aerial. The piece is overcharged with mythology and rural painting, is untheatrical, and

so far from portraying the genuine ideality of a pastoral world, it is filled with vulgarities.

The Two Noble Kinsmen.

The Two Noble Kinsmen is held to be the joint production of Shakespeare and Fletcher. The play, it is true, did not make its appearance till after the death of both; but there is no apparent motive with the editor or printer for any deception, as Fletcher's name was at the time in greater celebrity than Shakespeare's. We think we can perceive the mind of Shakespeare in a certain ideal purity, which distinguishes this piece from all others of Fletcher's, and in the conscientious fidelity with which the story adheres to that of Chaucer's *Palamon and Arcite*. In the style Shakespeare's hand is at first discoverable in a brevity and fullness of thought bordering on obscurity. The first acts are most carefully elaborated; afterward the piece is drawn out to too great a length and with an epic treatment, while the dramatic law of quickening the action toward the conclusion is not sufficiently observed.

The Scornful Lady.

In pure comedy, varied with broad farce and mock-heroic parody, Beaumont was the earliest as well as the ablest disciple of the master whose mantle was afterward to be shared among the academic poets of a younger generation. The best example of the school of Jonson to be found outside the ample range of his work

is *The Scornful Lady*, a comedy whose exceptional success and prolonged popularity must have been due to the broad effect of its forcible situations, its wealth and variety of ludicrous incidents and the strong gross humor of its dialogue, rather than to any finer quality of style, invention or character. It is, moreover, as coarse as the coarsest work of Ben Jonson, and this is saying much.

Beaumont and Fletcher Contrasted.

The buoyant and facile grace of Fletcher's style carries him lightly across quagmires in which a heavier-footed poet would have stuck fast, and come forth bemired to the knees. To Beaumont his stars had given as birthright the gifts of tragic pathos and passion, of tender power and broad, strong humor; to Fletcher had been allotted a more fiery and fruitful force of invention, a more aerial ease and swiftness of action, a more various readiness and fullness of bright exuberant speech. The genius of Beaumont was deeper, sweeter, nobler than his elder's; the genius of Fletcher more brilliant, more supple, more prodigal and more voluble than his friend's. No surer test or better example can be taken of the distinctive quality which denotes the graver genius of either poet than that supplied by the comparison of Beaumont's *Triumph of Love* with Fletcher's *Triumph of Death*. Each little play, in the brief course of its single act, gives proof of the peculiar touch and special trick of its author's hand; the deeper and more delicate passion of Beaumont, the rapid and ardent activity of Fletcher, have nowhere found a more notice-

able vent for the expression, on the one hand, of tender simplicity and sweetness, on the other, of the buoyant and impatient energy of tragic emotions. Rich as are some of Fletcher's writings, he may claim a higher and more special station among his dramatic peers by right of his comic and romantic than of his tragic and historical plays. Even in the latter he is more a romantic than a tragic poet. The quality of his genius, never sombre or subtle or profound, bears him always toward fresh air and sunshine. His natural work is in the midday world of fearless boyish laughter and hardly bitter tears. There is always more of rainbow than of storm in his skies; their darkest shadow is but a tragic twilight. What with him is the noon of night would seem as sunshine on the stage of Ford or Webster. In pure comedy, *Rule a Wife and Have a Wife* is the acknowledged masterpiece of Fletcher, and next to it we might place, for comic spirit and force of character, *Wit Without Money*, *The Wildgoose Chase*, *The Chances* and *The Noble Gentleman*, the last a broad poetic farce overflowing with fun and extravagance.

Shirley.

James Shirley, in the opinion of Charles Lamb, "claims a place among the worthies of this period, not so much for any transcendent genius in himself as that he was the last of a great race"—the race, that is, which gathers around Shakespeare, for of his own lineage there was nothing special to boast. Born in London, in 1596, he was educated for a profession, first at Merchant

Taylor's school and then at Oxford and Cambridge. The church was his destination; but as he had turned Roman Catholic, he betook himself to teaching for a livelihood.

While Shirley was thus engaged at St. Alban's, his first play, the comedy of *Love Tricks*, was accepted, and this was probably the greatest misfortune of his life, for it turned an excellent teacher into an indifferent dramatist. For eighteen years he was a prolific writer for the stage, producing more than thirty pieces, and showing no sign of exhaustion when, in 1642, a Puritan edict put a stop to his occupation. Again he turned teacher, and prospered, publishing educational works, together with a collection of poems and masks written during this period of dramatic eclipse. Though some of his comedies were revived in the reign of Charles II, he did not again write for the stage, and died, as is said, together with his second wife, from the effects of fright caused by the great fire of 1666.

That Shirley's plays were not without merit is shown by their publication, as late as 1833, in six volumes, with notes by Gifford and Dyce. If they are lacking in original force, they show much stage-craft and manipulative dexterity. He was born, it must be remembered, to great dramatic wealth, and he handled it freely and skillfully. He did not, like some of his more famous predecessors, take his plots from romance or history, but out of the abundance of materials that had been accumulated by more originaive men during thirty years of unexampled dramatic activity. He did not strain after novelty of situation or character, but worked with

confident ease and copiousness on the familiar lines, contriving situations and drawing characters after types whose effectiveness on the stage had been fully proved by experience. His style has not the true ring of the great dramatist, but appears rather as the knack of a clever workman, and is often employed in a strained and artificial elevation of commonplace thought. Yet his poetic diction is not without ease and spirit; his scenes are ingeniously conceived; his characters boldly and clearly drawn, and he has a thorough knowledge of stage effect.

Massinger.

Philip Massinger ranks as one of the most scholarly and powerful dramatists of his day. Born in 1584, he went to Oxford in 1602, and the only fact that we know of him between his leaving the university in 1606 and having a comedy performed at court in 1621, is that he, with Field and Daborne, also playwrights, asked for an advance of five pounds from Henslowe, the theatrical capitalist, because they were "in unfortunate extremities." In his part of the document Massinger says that he has "ever found" Henslowe "a true, loving friend," an expression which seems to point to his having been connected with plays and players for some considerable time. After 1621 many of his plays were acted and published; but from the tone of his dedications it is to be inferred that he was often in pecuniary straits. The entry in the parish register of St. Savior's—"March 20, 1639, buried Philip Massinger, a stranger"—may mean only that he was not a resident in the parish; but it is

sadly out of keeping with the dramatist's place in the estimation of posterity. The evidence that he was a Roman Catholic at the time when the creed was held under heavy pains and penalties rests chiefly upon three of his plays, *The Virgin Martyr*, *The Renegado* and *The Maid of Honor*, in the first of which he was assisted by Dekker. At least it is certain that only a Roman Catholic audience could be expected to enter into the spirit of these plays and applaud at the end; and it is remarkable that they were allowed to appear at all in the reign of James I.

The Virgin Martyr.

This piece, founded on the martyrdom of Dorothea in the time of Diocletian, is, in effect, an old miracle play in five acts. The devil himself appears on the stage—first in human form as the servant of a persecutor, hunting out victims and instigating the most cruel tortures; afterward in “a fearful shape,” with fire flashing around him. The page of the martyr Dorothea is an angel in disguise, who also appears in his own proper shape before the end of the play. Dorothea is tortured on the stage in the most revolting fashion, dragged about by the hair, kicked and beaten with cudgels, but her page Angelo stands by, and she is miraculously preserved from hurt. Other miracles are performed. A persecutor falls down in a fit when about to subject the martyr's constancy to the foulest trials. In the last act a basket of fruit from paradise is brought on, and the chief prosecutor eating of it is wholly changed in spirit

In the play of The Virgin Martyr, Dorothea is tortured on the stage in the most revolting fashion, but her page, Angelo, stands by in the guise of an angel, and she is miraculously preserved from hurt.



and drives away his diabolic servant by holding up a cross of flowers. At the close the martyrs appear in white robes, transfigured. The piece further resembles the miracle play in the coarseness of the comic scenes intended to illustrate the power of the devil over the most base and grovelling natures; but the tone of the play throughout is serious and lofty, and the passions of the persecutors and the heroic devotion of the martyrs are given with great dramatic force.

The Renegado.

This is, in truth, a very remarkable production to have appeared suddenly amid the run of secular pieces. It seems, however, to have been popular, and was several times reprinted before the Restoration. It is a powerfully-constructed play, strong in character and incident. Massinger's leaning to Roman doctrine is supposed to be shown by his making one of his heroines—a converted Turk and a sultan's sister—experience complete spiritual transformation after receiving the rite of baptism. But there is a more suggestive and stranger fact than this. The hero, Francisco, is a Jesuit priest, treated with profound respect throughout, a man of noble, unselfish aims, running all risks to save and gain souls, exercising the strongest moral influence for the wisest and most benevolent purposes. Francisco's influence pervades the play, and is crowned with triumph at the end. He sails back to Venice with a noble lady rescued from the Turk, her virtue protected by an amulet during her captivity, a renegade military hero

restored to his country and the church, and the beautiful sister of the sultan converted to Christianity. That a London audience tolerated this glorification of a Jesuit within twenty years of the Gunpowder plot is an extraordinary fact.

A New Way to Pay Old Debts.

It may be doubted whether Massinger was ever a popular dramatist. His poverty is not, indeed, conclusive on this point, for the prices paid for plays were so small that a dramatist could hardly make a livelihood by play-writing, unless he was also an actor or a theatrical manager. But the best qualities of his plays appeal rather to thoughtful politicians, moralists and students of character than to the simple feelings of the ordinary playgoer. Only one of them, *A New Way to Pay Old Debts*—given in the preceding volume—still holds the stage, chiefly because the leading character, Sir Giles Overreach, a sort of commercial Richard III, a compound of “the lion and the fox,” provides many opportunities for a great actor. Like all Massinger’s plays, it is most ingenious and effective in construction, but in this, as in others, he has been more intent upon the elaboration of a plot and the exhibition of a ruling passion than upon winning the love and admiration of his audience for heroes and heroines. There are few more stirring scenes in dramatic story than are here provided for the actor who personates the avaricious Overreach. Kemble, Kean and Junius Brutus Booth gloried in the part, and many who heard them give the speech of Sir

Giles, furious with impotent rage, have testified to this as being one of their most memorable experiences of the stage.

With the exception of this play, the rest by Massinger have been relegated to the study since his own time. *The Fatal Dowry*, in which Massinger had the assistance of Field, was partially resuscitated by Rowe, being made the basis of the *Fair Penitent*. In Massinger's own judgment, the *Roman Actor* was "the most perfect birth of his Minerva." It is, in effect, a study of the tyrant Domitian, and of the results of despotic rule on the despot himself and his court; the intrigues and counter intrigues, the rise of sycophancy, the fall of honesty, the growth of the appetite for blood, the growth and final triumph of the spirit of revenge are exhibited with great power. Among the dramatists of this period, Massinger comes next to Shakespeare in the art of opening and developing a plot, and in this respect the *Bondman*, the *Duke of Milan* and the *Great Duke of Florence* are favorable specimens of his power. The manners and the characters are always clearly conceived, although the dramatist's strength is put forth in the portrayal of some one ruling passion. The action always marches forward steadily, with as little as possible of irrelevant digression. The language is never mean and never turgid, but in impassioned situations it wants fire and directness. Nineteen of the plays of Massinger are still extant, and of these a careful edition has been prepared by Gifford. By some critics he is preferred to Beaumont and Fletcher, and is esteemed as approaching more nearly to Shakespeare than any of his contemporaries.

Several of Massinger's plays have been lost, eight being accidentally destroyed by a cook. All that remain, with the exception of *A New Way to Pay Old Debts*, have long since been relegated to the closet; but there are several which deserve a better fate. Among them is the *Maid of Honor*, though the conclusion is one with which only an assemblage of very pious Catholics could have sympathized. In the final act the heroine relieves a very complicated situation by taking the veil, donating a third of her property to pious uses, a third to a nunnery, and the remaining third to an honest and faithful, but unsuccessful lover. For this she is held up to all posterity as "a fair example for noble maids to imitate."

III.

The Restoration Drama.

A reaction from the restraints of Puritanism was inevitable when "the king came into his own again." The restoration of the drama came with that of the monarchy. It brought into England the over-freedom of stage morals and manners which flourished in Paris under Molière's wand. Up to the outbreak of the civil war the drama in all its forms continued to enjoy the favor of the court, although a close supervision was exercised over all attempts to make the stage the vehicle of political references or allusions. The theatre could hardly expect to be allowed a liberty of speech in reference to matters of state denied to the public at large; and occasional attempts to indulge in the freedom of criticism dear to the spirit of comedy met with more or less decisive repression and punishment. But the sympathies of the dramatist were so entirely on the side of the court that the real difficulties against which the theatre had to contend came from a directly opposite quarter. With the growth of Puritanism the feeling of hostility to the stage increased in a large part of the population, well represented by the civic authorities of

the capital. This hostility found many ways of expressing itself. Three attempts to suppress the Blackfriars theatre proved abortive; but the representation of stage plays continued to be prohibited on Sundays, and during the prevalence of the plague in London was temporarily suspended, as were amusements of every description, though this was a time when some diversion from the surrounding horrors was most required.

Puritan Opposition.

The desire of the Puritans of the more pronounced type openly aimed at a permanent closing of the theatres. The war between them and the dramatists was accordingly of a life-and-death character. On the one hand, the drama heaped its bitterest and often coarsest attacks upon whatever savored of the Puritan spirit; gibes, taunts, caricatures in ridicule and aspersion of Puritans and Puritanism make up a great part of the comic literature of the later Elizabethan drama and of its aftergrowth in the reigns of the first two Stuarts. This feeling of hostility, to which Shakespeare was no stranger, rose into a spirit of open defiance in some of the masterpieces of Ben Jonson; and the comedies of his contemporaries and successors abound in caricatured reproductions of the more common or more extravagant types of Puritan life. On the other hand, the moral defects, the looseness of tone, the mockery of ties sanctioned by law and consecrated by religion, the tendency to treat middle-class life as the hunting-ground for the amusements of the upper classes, which degraded so

much of the dramatic literature of the age, intensified the Puritan opposition to all and any stage plays.

A Puritan Ordinance.

A patient endeavor to reform instead of suppressing the drama was not to be looked for from such adversaries, should they ever possess the means of carrying out their views; and so soon as Puritanism should victoriously assert itself in the state, the stage was doomed. The civil war began in August, 1642, and early in the following month was published the ordinance of the Lords and Commons, which commanded "that while those sad causes and set-times of humiliation do continue, public stage plays shall cease and be forborne." Most of the actors and playwrights entered the army of the king; many perished for his cause, and the survivors returned to London and continued to exercise their art in secret. Out of the ruins of all the former companies of actors, one alone was formed, which occasionally, though with very great caution, gave representations at the country seats of the great, in the vicinity of London. For among the other singularities to which the violence of those times gave rise, it was considered a proof of attachment to the old constitution to be fond of plays, and to reward and harbor those who acted them in private houses.

A few dramatic works were published at this period, and at country fairs were acted farces, called drolls, composed of the most vulgar scenes to be found in popular plays. Thus the life of the drama was not abso-

lutely extinct, and its darkest days proved shorter than its friends had feared. The Puritans hoped to serve God by prohibiting every liberal mental entertainment, calculated in any manner to adorn life, and more especially the drama, as being a public worship of Baal, even shutting their ears to church music as a demoniacal howling. If their ascendancy had been maintained much longer, England would have sunk into a condition little removed from barbarism. The oppression of the drama ceased in 1660, when the free exercise of all arts was restored with Charles II.

Influence of Charles II.

The influence which the government of this monarch had on the manners and spirit of the time, and the natural reaction against bigotry and intolerance are sufficiently well known. As the Puritans had brought republican principles and religious zeal into universal odium, so this light-minded monarch seemed expressly born to sport away all respect for the kingly dignity. England was inundated with foreign vices and follies. The court set the fashion of the most undisguised immorality, and its example was the more contagious as people imagined that they could only show their zeal for the new order of things by an extravagant way of thinking and living. The fanaticism of the republicans had been associated with strictness of manners; nothing, therefore, could be more easy and agreeable than to obtain the character of royalists by the extravagant indulgence of all lawful and unlawful pleasures. No-

where was the age of Louis XIV imitated with greater depravity. But the prevailing gallantry of the court of France had a certain reserve and delicacy of feeling; they sinned with some degree of dignity, and no man ventured to attack what was honorable, however at variance with it his own actions might be. The English played a part which was altogether unnatural to them; they gave themselves up to levity; they everywhere confounded the coarsest licentiousness with free mental vivacity, and did not perceive that the kind of grace which is still compatible with depravity disappears with the last veil which it throws off.

We can easily conceive the turn which, under such auspices, the new national taste must have taken. There existed no real knowledge of the fine arts, which were favored merely like other foreign fashions and inventions of luxury. The people neither felt a true want of poetry nor had any relish for it; they merely wished for a light and brilliant entertainment. The theatre, which in its former simplicity had attracted the spectators solely by the excellence of the dramatic works and the skill of the actors, was now furnished out with all the appliances with which we are at this day familiar; but what it gained in external decoration it lost in internal worth.

To Sir William Davenant the English theatre, on its revival after the Commonwealth, owes its new features. He introduced the Italian system of decoration, the costume, as it was then well or ill understood, the operatic music, and, in general, the use of the orchestra. For this undertaking Charles II had furnished him with

extensive privileges. Davenant was a sort of adventurer and wit, in every way worthy of the royal favor, to enjoy which, dignity of character was never a necessary requisite. He set himself to work in every way that a rich theatrical repertory may render necessary; he made alterations of old pieces, and also wrote himself plays, operas and prologues; but of all his writings nothing has escaped oblivion.

Dryden.

Dryden soon became and long remained the hero of the stage. From his influence in fixing the laws of versification and poetical language, especially in rhyme, he acquired a reputation altogether disproportionate to his true merit. Dryden wrote flowing and easy verse; the knowledge which he possessed was considerable, but undigested; and all this was coupled with the talent of giving a certain appearance of novelty to what was borrowed from all quarters. He had, besides, great vanity; he frequently disguises it under humble prologues; on other occasions he speaks out boldly and confidently, avowing his opinion that he has done better than Shakespeare, Fletcher and Jonson—for he places them about on the same level. All the merit of this he is, however, willing to ascribe to the refinement and advance of the age!

Dryden played, also, the part of the critic; he furnished his pieces richly with prefaces and treatises on dramatic poetry, in which he discourses upon the genius of Shakespeare and Fletcher, and about the entirely op-

posite example of Corneille; of the original boldness of the British stage, and of the rules of Aristotle and Horace. He imagined that he had invented a new species, namely, the heroic drama, as if tragedy had not from its very nature been always heroical! If we are, however, to seek for an heroic drama which is not peculiarly tragic, we shall find it among the Spaniards, who had long possessed it in the greatest perfection. From the uncommon facility of rhyming which Dryden possessed, it cost him little labor to compose his serious pieces entirely in rhyme; but this unavoidably communicates a certain stiffness to the dialogue. The manner of the older English poets, who generally used blank verse, and only occasionally introduced rhymes, was infinitely preferable.

The son of a Northamptonshire baronet and his Puritan wife, John Dryden received a thorough classical education, first at Westminster school, under the famous Doctor Busby, and then at Trinity college, Cambridge, where we hear nothing of his career except that he was "gated" and "put out of commons" for some unknown act of contumacy. Coming to London to seek his fortune, he first emerged from obscurity with his *Heroic Stanzas*, in memory of the Protector, whose death occurred in 1658.

Astræa Redux.

From a moral point of view, Dryden's next appearance as a poet is not creditable. To those who regard the poet as a seer with a sacred mission, and refuse the name altogether to a literary manufacturer to order, it

comes with a certain shock to find Dryden, the hereditary Puritan, the panegyrist of Cromwell, hailing the return of King Charles in *Astræa Redux*, deploring his long absence and proclaiming the despair with which he had seen "the rebel thrive, the loyal crost." From a literary point of view, also, *Astræa Redux* is very inferior to the *Heroic Stanzas*; Dryden had need of Waller's clever excuse that it is easier to praise a bad man than a good, because the essence of poetry is fiction. And it was not merely in thus hastening to welcome the coming guest, and recant all praise of his rival, that Dryden showed a shamelessly accommodating spirit and placed himself in such unpleasant contrast to the greater poet who was awaiting his fate in all but friendless blindness. It might have been expected of one with his Puritan connections and scholarly training that, if he purposed making a living by the stage, which was restored with Charles, his literary as well as his moral conscience would have required him to make some effort to raise or at least not to lower its tone. But Dryden seems to have had no higher ambition than to make money by his pen. He naturally first thought of tragedy—his own genius, as he has informed us, inclining him rather to that species of composition; and in the first year of the Restoration he wrote a tragedy on the fate of the duke of Guise. But some friends advised him that its construction was not suited to the requirements of the stage; so he put it aside, and used only one scene of the original play later on, when he again attempted the subject with a more practised hand. In truth Dryden was never a great dramatist in the proper

sense of the term, his stilted versification and clumsy dialogue acting as insuperable obstacles.

Comedies.

Having failed to write a suitable tragedy, Dryden next turned his attention to comedy, although, as he admitted, he had little natural turn for it. He was afterward very frank in explaining his reasons for writing comedy. "I confess," he said, in a short essay in his own defense, "my chief endeavors are to delight the age in which I live. If the humor of this be for low comedy, small accidents and raillery, I will force my genius to obey it, though with more reputation I could write in verse. I know I am not so fitted by nature to write comedy; I want that gayety of humor which is required to it. My conversation is slow and dull; my humor saturnine and reserved; in short, I am none of those who endeavor to break jests in company or make repartees. So that those who decry my comedies do me no injury, except it be in point of profit; reputation in them is the last thing to which I shall pretend."

This, of course, was said by Dryden standing at bay; there was some bravado, but also a great deal of frank truth in it. He was really as well as ostentatiously a playwright; the age demanded comedies, and he endeavored to supply the kind of comedy that it required. His first attempt was unsuccessful. Bustle, intrigue and coarsely humorous dialogue seemed to him to be part of the popular demand; and, looking about for a plot, he found something to suit him in a Spanish

source, and wrote *The Wild Gallant*. The play was acted in February, 1663, by Killigrew's company in Vere street. It was not a success, although the most farcical incident acquired a certain interest and probability from a story which was current at the time. That a student, fresh from his library, trying to hit the taste of the groundlings with ribald farce, should make the ingredients too strong even for their palates was but natural. Pepys showed good judgment in pronouncing the piece "so poor a thing as ever I saw in my life." That such a play would be written by Dryden, with one of the daughters of Stephen Marshall in the cast, must have been a bitter thought for Puritanism at the time. Dryden never learned moderation in his humor; there is a student's clumsiness and extravagance in his indecency, and of this he seems to have been conscious, for when the play was revived, in 1667, he complained in the epilogue of the difficulty of comic wit, and admitted the right of a common audience to judge of its success.

Dryden took a lesson from the failure of *The Wild Gallant*; his next comedy, *The Rival Ladies*, founded on a Spanish plot, was correctly described by Pepys as "a very innocent and most witty play," though there was much in it which the taste of our time would consider indelicate. But he never quite conquered his tendency to extravagance. *The Wild Gallant* was not the only victim. *The Assination, or Love in a Nunnery*, produced in 1673, shared the same fate; and even as late as 1680, when he had twenty years' experience to guide him, *Limberham, or The Kind Keeper*, was

prohibited, after three representations, as being too indecent for the stage. Dislike to coarseness we are apt to think a somewhat ludicrous pretext to be made by Restoration playgoers, 'and probably there was some other reason for the sacrifice of *Limberham*; still, there is a certain savageness in the spirit of Dryden's indecency which we do not find in his most licentious contemporaries. The undisciplined force of the man carried him to an excess from which more dexterous writers held back.

The Indian Queen.

After the production of *The Rival Ladies*, Dryden assisted Sir Robert Howard in the composition of a tragedy in heroic verse, *The Indian Queen*, produced with great splendor in January, 1664. It was probably through this collaboration that Dryden made the acquaintance of Lady Elizabeth Howard, Sir Robert's sister, whom he had married the previous year. Lady Elizabeth's reputation was somewhat compromised before this union, and, though she brought a small addition to the poet's income, she does not seem to have added to his happiness. *The Indian Queen* was a great success, one of the greatest since the reopening of the theatres. This was in all likelihood due much less to the heroic verse and the exclusion of comic scenes from the tragedy than to the magnificent scenic accessories—the battles and sacrifices on the stage, the aerial demons singing in the air and the god of dreams ascending through a trap. The novelty of these Indian spectacles, as well as of the Indian characters, with the splendid

Queen Zempoalla, acted by Mrs. Marshall in a real Indian dress of feathers presented to her by Mrs. Aphra Behn, as the centre of the play, was the chief secret of the success. These melodramatic properties were so marked a novelty that they could not fail to draw the town. The heroic verse formed but a small ingredient in the play; still, being also a novelty which had just been introduced by Davenant in *The Siege of Rhodes*, it interested the scholarly part of the audience, and so helped to consolidate the success of the stage carpenter. Dryden was tempted to return to tragedy; he followed up *The Indian Queen* with *The Indian Emperor*, which also proved a success.

During the great plague, when the theatres were closed and Dryden was living in the country at the house of his father-in-law, he occupied a considerable part of his time in thinking over the principles of dramatic composition, and threw his meditations and conclusions into the form of dialogue, which he called an *Essay of Dramatic Poetry*. One of the main topics was the admissibility of rhyme in serious plays, Dryden making Neander, the interlocutor, who represents himself, repeat with fresh illustrations all that he had before said in its favor. By this time, however, Sir Robert Howard, his brother-in-law, whom he had joined in writing the rhymed *Indian Queen*, had changed his mind about the heroic couplet, and made some offensive comments on Dryden's essay in a preface to *The Duke of Lerma*. Dryden at once replied in a masterpiece of sarcastic retort and vigorous reasoning, publishing his reply as a preface to *The Indian Emperor*. It is by far

the ablest and most complete statement of his views as to the employment of rhymed couplets in tragedy.

Annus Mirabilis.

Before his return to town at the end of 1666, when the theatres were reopened, Dryden wrote his famous *Annus Mirabilis*, on the Dutch war and the Great Fire. The poem is in quatrains, the metre of his *Heroic Stanzas* in praise of Cromwell, which Dryden chose, he tells us, "because he had ever judged it more noble and of greater dignity both for the sound and number than any other verse in use among us." The preface to the poem contains an interesting discussion of what he calls "wit-writing," introduced by the remark that "the composition of all the poems is or ought to be of wit." His description of the Fire is a famous specimen of this wit-writing, and much more careless and daring and much more difficult to sympathize with than the graver conceits in his panegyric of the Protector. In *Annus Mirabilis* the poet apostrophizes the newly-founded Royal Society, of which he had been elected a member.

Secret Love.

From the reopening of the theatres, in 1666, till November, 1681, the date of his *Absalom and Achitophel*, Dryden produced nothing but plays, and the stage was his chief source of income. *Secret Love, or The Maiden Queen*, a tragi-comedy, produced in March, 1667, does not come up to our expectations as the first

fruit of the author's rest from composition and prolonged study of dramatic art. The prologue claims that it is written with pains and thought, by the exactest rules, with strict observance of the unities, and "a mingled chime of Jonson's humor and of Corneille's rhyme;" but it owed its success chiefly to the charm of Nell Gwynne's acting in the part of Florimel. His next play, *Sir Martin Marall*, an adaptation from Molière's *L'Etourdi*, was produced at the Duke's theatre, in the name of the duke of Newcastle. It was about this time that Dryden became a retained writer under contract for the King's theatre, receiving from it £300 or £400 a year, till it was burnt down in 1672, and about £200 for six years thereafter. He was engaged to write three plays a year, and he contributed only ten plays during as many years of his engagement, finally exhausting the patience of his partners by joining in the composition of a play for the rival house.

Low Comedy.

In adapting *L'Etourdi* Dryden did not catch Molière's lightness of touch; his alterations go toward turning the comedy into a farce. There is always a certain coarseness in Dryden's humor, apart from the coarseness of his age—an almost brutal roughness which belongs to the character of the man. *An Evening's Love, or the Mock Astrologer*, an adaptation from the younger Corneille, produced by him at the King's theatre in 1668, seemed to Pepys "very smutty, and nothing so good as *The Maiden Queen*." Evelyn

thought it foolish and profane, and was grieved "to see how the stage was degenerated and polluted by the licentious times." *Ladies à la Mode*, another of Dryden's contract comedies, was "so mean a thing," Pepys says, that it was only once acted, and never published. Of his other comedies, only *Marriage à la Mode* was moderately successful; but assuredly they did not fail for want of ribaldry.

Heroic Tragedy.

While Dryden met with such indifferent success in his efforts to supply the demand of the age for low comedy, he struck upon a really popular and profitable vein in heroic tragedy. *Tyrannic Love, or the Royal Martyr*, a Roman play, in which St. Catherine is introduced, and with her some striking supernatural machinery, was produced in 1669. It is in rhymed couplets, but the author did not trust to them solely for success; for, besides the magic incantations, the singing angels, and the view of Paradise, he made Nell Gwynne, who had stabbed herself as Valeria, start to life again as she was being carried off the stage, and speak a riotously funny epilogue, in violent contrast with the serious character of the play. *Almazor and Almahide, or the Conquest of Granada*, a tragedy in two parts, appeared in 1670. It seems to have given the crowning touch of provocation to the wits, who had never ceased to ridicule the popular taste for these extravagant heroic plays. Dryden almost invited burlesque in his epilogues to *The Conquest of Granada*, in

which he charged the comedy of the Elizabethan age with coarseness and mechanical humor, and claimed for his own time and his own plays an advance in these respects.

The Rehearsal.

The Rehearsal, written by the duke of Buckingham, with the assistance, it was said, of Clifford and others, was a severe and just punishment for this boast. Dryden is here unmercifully ridiculed, under the name of Bayes, in allusion to the laureateship granted by the king, with a pension of £300 a year and a butt of canary wine. It is commonly said that Dryden passed over the attack on himself without reply, either because he admitted its justice or because he feared to offend the king's favorite. But this is not strictly so; his answer is contained in the dedication and preface to his *Conquest of Granada*; and in his prose defense of the epilogue he addresses his censors from the eminence of success, saying that "with the common good fortune of prosperous gamesters he can be content to sit quietly." Heroic verse, he assures them, is so established that few tragedies are likely henceforward to be written in any other metre, and he retorts upon their exposure of improbabilities in his plays, by criticising the "ridiculous incoherent stories" of Shakespeare and Jonson.

Ambogna and Aurungzebe.

Dryden did not write many more heroic plays in rhyme; for the ridicule of *The Rehearsal* had probably

destroyed their popularity. His next tragedy, *Ambayna*, an exposition of certain atrocities committed by the Dutch on English merchants in the East Indies, put on the stage to inflame the public mind, in view of the Dutch war, was written, with the exception of a few passages, in prose, and a few others in blank verse. *Aurungzebe* was his last rhymed tragedy, and in the prologue he confessed that he had grown weary of his long-loved mistress rhyme. But the stings of *The Rehearsal* had stimulated him to do his utmost to justify his devotion. He claims that *Aurungzebe* is "the most correct" of his plays, and it is certainly superior, both in versification and in moderation of language, to its predecessors.

All for Love.

After the production of *Aurungzebe* Dryden seems to have rested for an interval from writing, enabled to do so by an additional pension of £100 granted him by the king. During this interval he would seem to have reconsidered the principles of dramatic composition, and to have made a particular study of the works of Shakespeare. The fruits of this appeared in *All for Love, or the World Well Lost*, a version of the story of Antony and Cleopatra, which must be regarded as a new departure in his dramatic career, a very remarkable departure for a man forty-seven years of age, and a wonderful proof of his vigor and plasticity of mind. He gave all his strength to *All for Love*, writing the play for himself, as he said, and not for the public.

Carrying out the idea expressed in the title, he represents the two lovers as being more entirely under the dominion of love than Shakespeare's Antony and Cleopatra. Shakespeare's Antony is moved by other impulses than the passion for Cleopatra; it is his master motive, but it has to maintain a struggle for supremacy; "Roman thoughts" strike in upon him even in the very height of the enjoyment of his mistress' love; he chafes under the yoke, and breaks away from her of his own impulse at the call of reawakened ambition. Dryden's Antony is so deeply sunk in love that no other impulse has power to stir him; it takes much persuasion and skillful artifice to detach him from Cleopatra even in thought, and his soul returns to her violently before the rupture has been completed. On the other hand, Dryden's Cleopatra is so completely enslaved by love for Antony that she is incapable of using the calculated caprices and meretricious coquetries which Shakespeare's Cleopatra deliberately practises as the highest art of love, the surest way of maintaining her empire over the great captain's heart. It is with difficulty that Dryden's Cleopatra will agree, on the earnest solicitation of a wily counsellor, to feign a liking for Dolabelle to excite Antony's jealousy, and she cannot keep up the pretense, even through a few sentences. The characters of the two lovers are thus very much contracted, indeed almost overwhelmed, beneath the pressure of the one ruling motive.

And as Dryden thus introduces a greater regularity of character into the drama, so he also very much contracts the action, in order to give probability to this

temporary subjugation of individual character. The action of Dryden's play takes place wholly in Alexandria, within the compass of a few days; it does not, like Shakespeare's, extend over several years, and present incessant changes of scene. Dryden chooses, as it were, a fragment of an historical action, a single moment during which motives play within a narrow circle, the culminating point in the relations between his two personages. He devotes his whole play, also, to those relations; only what bears upon them is admitted. In Shakespeare's play we get a certain historical perspective, in which the love of Antony and Cleopatra appears in its true proportions beneath the firmament that overhangs human affairs. In Dryden's play this love is our universe; all the other concerns of the world retire into a shadowy, indistinct background. If we rise from a comparison of the two plays with an impression that the Elizabethan drama is a higher type, we rise also with an impression of Dryden's power such as we get from nothing else that he has written.

It was twelve years before Dryden produced another tragedy worthy of the power shown in *All for Love*. *Don Sebastian* was acted and published in 1690, and in the interval, to sum up briefly Dryden's work as a dramatist, he wrote *Ædipus* and *The Duke of Guise*, in conjunction with Lee; *Troilus and Cressida*, *The Spanish Friar*, *Albion and Albonius*, an opera, and *Amphitryon*. In *Troilus and Cressida* he follows Shakespeare closely in the plot, but the dialogue is rewritten throughout, and not for the better. The

versification and the language of the first and third acts of *Ædipus*, which, with the general plan of the play were Dryden's contribution to the joint work, bear marked evidence of his recent study of Shakespeare. The plot of *Don Sebastian* is more intricate than that of *All for Love*. It has also more of the characteristics of his heroic dramas; the extravagance of sentiment and the suddenness of impulse remind us occasionally of *The Indian Emperor*; but the characters are much more elaborately studied than in Dryden's earlier plays, and the verse is sinewy and powerful. It would be difficult to say whether *Don Sebastian* or *All for Love* is his better play; they share the palm between them. Dryden's subsequent plays are not remarkable. Their titles are—*King Arthur*, an opera, *Cleomenes* and *Love Triumphant*.

Absalom and Achitophel.

Dryden had now found new and more congenial work for his favorite instrument in satire. As usual the idea was not original to him, though he struck in with his usual energy, and immediately took the lead. His pioneer was Mulgrave's *Essay on Satire*, an attack on Rochester and the court, circulated in 1679. Dryden himself was suspected of the authorship, and cudgelled by hired ruffians as the author; but it is not likely that he attacked the king on whom he was dependent for the greater part of his income. In the same year Oldham's satire on the Jesuits had immense popularity, chiefly owing to the excitement about the Popish plot. Dryden took the field as a satirist, on

the side of the court, at the moment when Shaftesbury, baffled in his efforts to exclude the duke of York from the throne as a papist and secure the succession of the duke of Monmouth, was waiting his trial for high treason. *Absalom and Achitophel* produced a great stir. Nine editions were sold in rapid succession in the course of a year. It was a new thing for the public to have the leading men of the day held up to laughter, contempt and indignation under disguises which a little trouble enabled them to penetrate. There was no compunction in Dryden's ridicule and invective; delicate wit was not one of his gifts; the motions of his weapon were sweeping, and the blow hard and trenchant. The advantage he had gained by his recent studies of character was fully used in his portraits of Shaftesbury and Buckingham, Achitophel and Zimri. In these portraits he shows considerable art in the introduction of redeeming traits to the general outline of malignity and depravity. Against Buckingham he had old scores to pay off; but he was too practised in the language of eulogy and invective to need any personal stimulus. "Glorious John" had a mind superior to petty hatreds, as well as to petty friendships, and it is not impossible that the fact that his pension was in arrears weighed with him in writing this satire to gain the favor of the court.

The Hind and Panther.

Dryden's next poem in heroic couplets was in a different strain. On the accession of James II, in 1685,

he became a Roman Catholic. There has been much discussion as to whether this conversion was or was not sincere. It can only be said that the coincidence between his change of faith and his change of patron was suspicious, and that Dryden's character for consistency is certainly not such as to preclude suspicion. The force of the coincidence cannot be removed by such pleas as that his wife had been a Roman Catholic for several years, or that he was converted by his son, who himself became a convert at Cambridge. Scott defended his conversion, as Macaulay denounced it, from party motives; on any other grounds, it is not worth discussing. Nothing can be clearer than that Dryden, all his life through, regarded his literary powers as a means of subsistence, and had little scruple about accepting a brief on any side. *The Hind and Panther*, published in 1687, is an ingenious argument for Roman Catholicism, put into the mouth of "a milk-white hind, immortal and unchanged." There is considerable beauty in the picture of this tender creature, and its enemies in the forest are not spared. One can understand the admiration that the poem received when such allegories were in fashion. It was the chief cause of the veneration with which Dryden was regarded by Pope, who, himself educated in the Roman Catholic faith, was taken as a boy of twelve to see the veteran poet in his chair of honor and authority at Wills' coffee-house. It was also very open to ridicule, and was treated in this spirit by Prior and Montagu, the future earl of Halifax. *The Hind and Panther* was written in part in the interest of James II, as also was his

eulogy of that monarch, *Britannia Rediviva*, surely an inappropriate title, in the light of national events.

Translations.

It is certainly to Dryden's credit that he did not abjure his new faith on the accession of William III, and so lost his office and pension as laureate and historiographer royal. Thus thrown mainly upon his pen for support, he turned again to the stage and wrote some of the plays which have been enumerated. A great feature in the last decade of his life was his translations from the classics, chief among them being Virgil, on which he worked so hard that great expectations were formed of it. To judge it by its fidelity as a reproduction of the original would be to apply too high a standard; but it is an interesting rendition of Virgil into the style of Dryden, and as a poem was read with delight in his own age. Dryden's life was mainly spent in translating for bread. He had a windfall of five hundred guineas from Lord Abingdon for a poem on the death of his wife in 1691, but generally he was in pecuniary straits. He is supposed to have received occasional presents from rich and powerful friends, but he never received anything from court, and he was too proud to make advances. However, he was not molested in London by the government, and in private he was treated with the respect due to his old age and his admitted position as the greatest of living English poets. His death took place on the 1st of May, 1700.

Dryden's conversion to Catholicism had doubtless a

great influence on the preservation of his fame. It was this which gained him the discipleship and loving imitation of Pope. He thus became, by accident, as it were, the literary father and chief model of the greatest poet of the next generation. If his fame had stood simply upon his merits as a poet he would, in all likelihood, have been a much less imposing figure in literary history. The splendid force of his satire must always be admired, but there is surprisingly little of the vast mass of his writings that can be considered worthy of lasting remembrance. He showed little inventive genius. He was simply a masterly litterateur of immense intellectual energy, whose lucky hit was the clever application of heroic couplets to satire and religious, moral and political argument. Dryden lent his gift of verse to the service of politics, and his fame profited by the connection. It would be unjust to say that his fame was due to this, but it was helped by this; apart from the attachment of Pope, he owed to party also something of the favor of Johnson and the personal championship and editorial zeal of Scott.

Shadwell.

Dryden's successor in the laureateship was Thomas Shadwell, a playwright and miscellaneous versifier of the Restoration period, remembered now not by his works, though he was a prolific writer of comedies highly successful in their day, but as the subject of Dryden's satirical portraits "MacFlecknoe" and "Og." He was a native of Norfolk—not an Irishman, as he re-

torted with significant imbecility when Dryden's satire appeared—went through the forms of study at Cambridge and the Inner Temple, travelled abroad for a season, returned to London, cultivated the literary society of coffee-houses and taverns, and at the age of twenty-eight gained the ear of the stage with *The Sullen Lovers*. For fourteen years thereafter he continued to produce a comedy nearly every year, showing considerable cleverness in caricaturing the oddities of the time. Ben Jonson was his model, but he drew his materials largely from contemporary life; for he was a close observer, and held his own among the wits of the time. In the quarrel with Dryden he was the aggressor. They had been good friends, and Dryden had furnished him with a prologue for one of his comedies; but when the great poet threw in his lot with the court, and satirized the opposition in *Absalom and Achitophel*, Shadwell was rash enough to constitute himself the champion of the true-blue Protestants and wrote a grossly personal and scurrilous attack on the author, entitled *The Medal of John Bayes*. Dryden immediately retorted in *MacFlecknoe*, the most powerful and contemptuously scornful personal satire in our language, adding a few more rough touches of supercilious mockery in the second part of *Absalom and Achitophel*, where Shadwell figures as "Og:"

Og from a treason-tavern rolling home,
Round as a globe, and liquored every chink;
Goodly and great he sails behind his link.

Dryden may not be strictly fair when he addresses

his enemy as "thou last great prophet of tautology," and makes Flecknoe extol him because "he never deviates into sense," but Shadwell had fairly earned his chastisement, the sting of which lay in its substantial truth. Nevertheless, on Dryden's resignation of the laureateship, in 1688, Shadwell was promoted to the office, a sign of the poverty of the Whig party, at the time, in literary men.

Otway.

The author of *Venice Preserved* shares with Dryden the chief honors of the classical school of poets, and yet died of want, after a life of misery and abject poverty. His misfortunes were assuredly not due to lack of early training or of later opportunity, and as with many another literary genius, the fault was entirely his own. With rare exceptions the possession of common sense does not seem to consist with the poetic faculty, and especially was this the case with Thomas Otway, one of the most gifted but, in worldly circumstance, one of the most abject among those who shed lustre on an age whose literary excellence was its only redeeming feature. The son of a village rector, Otway completed his education at Christ Church college, Oxford, and straightway tried his fortune as an actor at the Duke's theatre, London. He failed so completely that he never again appeared on the stage, obtaining a cornetcy in a troop of horse, which he held for less than a twelve-month.

At the age of twenty-four we find Otway stranded as a literary adventurer in the wilderness of London,

friendless, penniless, and without the physical or moral stamina needed for so hard an experience. Yet he made an effort. Within a few months his *Alcibiades*, a poor play, was performed with indifferent success at the Duke's theatre. In the following year *Don Carlos*, a vigorous rhymed tragedy, puerile in conception and showing little knowledge of human nature, but full of declamatory energy, took the town fairly by storm. He followed it with translations of Racine's *Berenice*, Molière's *Fourberies de Scapin*, and a very dull and indecent comedy of his own, *Friendship in Fashion*. Then he went to the wars in Flanders, on which he wrote *The Soldier's Fortune*. Soon afterward he produced *The Orphan*, founded on a novel called *English Adventures*, one of the two plays which won for him the exalted rank which he holds among the tragic poets of the Restoration. Yet, as in other instances, where Otway strives after eloquence, his attempted eloquence verges perilously on rant, while the madness of Belvidera approaches dangerously to burlesque. The latter has been cleverly parodied in Sheridan's *Critic*.

In Otway's next effort we have one of those literary freaks for which it is difficult to account, except on the ground of mental aberration. Selecting as the theme of a tragedy the story of Caius Marius, he committed a wholesale but acknowledged plagiarism from *Romeo and Juliet*, taking from it verbally half the scenes of his play, except for disfiguring alterations. Nothing more incongruous can be conceived than to invest this stern episode in Roman history with the exquisite coloring of one of the most pathetic love stories in the world.

The impudence and absurdity of the plagiarism are by no means justified by its confession.

Venice Preserved.

But Otway soon redeemed his fame. Some two years later appeared his masterpiece, *Venice Preserved*, founded on Saint Réal's *Histoire de La Conjuration du Marquis de Bedemar*. The love scenes between Jaffier and Belvidera have seldom been surpassed, and few, indeed, are the plots that have been so skillfully calculated to excite the emotions of an audience. The characters have little of interest; but the circumstances in which they are placed afford scope for the most moving appeals, and merit and demerit are entirely lost sight of in the intensity of human suffering. In pathos, but in this respect only, Otway is the Euripides of the English stage, and his pathos is never strained nor introduced merely for effect, but arises entirely out of the situation. And so it is in *The Orphan*, which is second only to *Venice Preserved*, though banished from the stage by modern fastidiousness, notwithstanding that so strict a censor as Doctor Johnson pronounced it perfectly harmless. In both tragedies the pathos is irresistible; but there is nothing else that rises above mediocrity. The ideas are circumscribed and commonplace; there is no deep insight into the human heart, and what the author intends for eloquence is little better than rant.

Nor does Otway succeed better when he introduces comic elements into his tragedy, and especially is this

apparent in *Venice Preserved*, where what is intended for comedy is often mere indecency. The scenes between Antonio, the old senator, and Aquilina, the courtesan, which delighted the licentious audiences of the days of Charles II are either expunged or deemed unworthy of the play. But there is another reason for this. The part of Antonio was written with an allusion that has long since been forgotten, and hence has lost what used to be its most attractive feature. It exposes the wantonness which disgraced the old age of the first earl of Shaftesbury, and this is indicated in the original prologue—

A senator—

In Venice, none a higher office bore.

Now, when we consider that Shaftesbury had been Lord Chancellor, that his Christian name was Anthony, and that the prologue and epilogue, as first written, expressly declare that certain references in the play were intended to have a political significance, the allusion is sufficiently obvious. Moreover, in the epilogue, Otway expresses the utmost zeal for the cause of the duke of York, afterward James II, of whose attempted exclusion from the throne and virtual exile Shaftesbury was regarded as the chief promoter, and it was during his absence that the piece was first presented. In one of his interviews with Aquilina, Antonio says: "I can make a speech in the senate-house, now and then, would make your hair stand on end." Shaftesbury was extremely vain of his oratory, and

used it freely in his attempts to exclude the duke of York from the succession. In other interviews with the courtesan Antonio reveals in language that is unfortunately in keeping with his shameless character, the follies of wantonness combined with impotence, the despicable and unblushing depravity of his nature, and the conceit of ability and self-importance that clings to him amid all his meanness. While the indecent passages in *Venice Preserved* were passed over without comment by Addison and Johnson, they were noticed by readers and spectators of the drama, many of whom wished they had been omitted. Says the editor of the *Dramatic Censor*, who first brought these facts into public notice in 1752: "I have omitted to make any mention of the scenes between Aquilina, the courtesan, and the old senator, Antonio, as they were a disgrace to the piece, and since the reign of Charles II were never acted above once, when it was damned." The "merry monarch," however, ordered the objectionable scenes to be restored, though they were again consigned to oblivion by the public, who excused his action on the ground of a very imperfect knowledge of English.

Destitution.

Venice Preserved was a decided and immediate success, but it put no money into the author's purse, or not enough to relieve him from a condition of hopeless and abject poverty, further intensified by a sincere but unrequited attachment to a young actress, the leading woman in most of his plays, whom for many years he

loved, not wisely, but too well. He wrote but one more play, and that his poorest; for now he had given himself over to dissipation, and within a few months came the end. While living amid the slums of Tower hill he begged from a passing stranger a crust of bread, and this he devoured with the raven of a famished wolf, so that, as is said, he choked to death while swallowing it. The story is not absolutely confirmed; but whatever the manner of his taking off, there can be no doubt that he died in extreme destitution, and with none to extend a helping hand.

Etherege.

George Etherege, a Londoner who lived between 1636 and 1689, deserves to hold a more distinguished place in dramatic literature than has generally been allotted to him. In a dull and heavy age, he inaugurated a period of genuine wit and sprightliness; he invented the comedy of intrigue, and led the way for the masterpieces of Congreve and Sheridan. Before his time the manner of Ben Jonson had prevailed in comedy, and traditional "humours" and typical eccentricities, instead of real characters, had crowded the comic stage. Etherege paints with a light, faint hand, but it is from nature, and his portraits of fops and beaux are simply unexcelled. No one knows better than he how to present a gay young gentleman, "an unconfinable rover after amorous adventures." His genius is as light as thistledown; he is frivolous, without force of conviction, without principle; but his wit is sparkling, and his style pure and singularly pic-

turesque. No one approaches Etherege in delicate touches of scene and description; he makes the fine airs of London gentlemen and ladies live before our eyes even more vividly than Congreve; but he has less insight and less energy than Congreve. Had he been poor or ambitious he might have been to England almost what Molière was to France, but he was a rich man living at his ease, and he disdained to excel in literature. He was a scion of an ancient and distinguished Oxfordshire family, and was educated at Cambridge, but left the university early to travel in France and Flanders, returning to London to enter one of the Inns of Court. His tastes were those of a fine gentleman, and he indulged freely in pleasure, especially the pleasures of the cup. Soon after the Restoration he composed his comedy of *The Comical Revenge, or Love in a Tub*, which was brought out in the Duke's theatre in 1664, and printed in the same year. It is partly in rhymed heroic verse, but it contains comic scenes that are exceedingly bright and fresh, with a style of wit hitherto unknown upon the English stage. The success of the play was very great, but Etherege waited four years before he repeated his experiment, meanwhile gaining the highest reputation as a poetical beau, and moving in the circle of Sir Charles Sedley, Lord Rochester, and other noble wits of the day.

In 1668 Etherege brought out *She Would If She Could*, a comedy in many respects admirable, full of action, wit and spirit, but to the last degree frivolous and immoral; so that we seem to move in an airy and fantastic world, where flirtation is the only serious busi-

ness of life. At this time Etherege himself was living a life no less frivolous and unprincipled than those of his own characters. His wealth and wit, the distinction and charm of his manners, won him the general worship of society, and his temperament is best shown by the names his contemporaries gave him, of "gentle George" and "easy Etherege." The age upbraided him for inattention to literature; and at length, after a silence of eight years, he came forward with one more play. *The Man of Mode, or Sir Fopling Flutter*, indisputably the best comedy of intrigue written in England before the days of Congreve, was acted and printed in 1676, and had an unbounded success. Besides the merit of its plot and wit, it had the personal charm of being supposed to satirize, or at least to describe, persons well known in London. Sir Fopling Flutter was a portrait of Beau Hewit, the reigning exquisite of the hour; in Dorimant the poet drew the elegant Sir Charles Sedley, and in Medley a portrait of himself; while even the drunken shoemaker was a real character, who made his fortune from being thus brought into public notice.

After this brilliant success Etherege retired from literature; his gallantries and his gambling in a few years deprived him of his fortune, and he looked about him for a rich wife. In 1683 he met with a wealthy elderly widow, who consented to marry him if he made a lady of her. He accordingly got himself knighted, and gained her hand and her money. It is said that before this he had been sent on an embassy to Turkey; and it is certain that soon afterward he was appointed resi-

dent minister in the German court at Ratisbon, where, in 1689, he met his death by accident, as is related.

D'Urfey.

Among the minor lights of the Restoration period was Thomas D'Urfey, satirist, song writer and dramatist. Descended from a family of French Huguenot refugees, and born at Exeter in an unknown year, he was originally intended for the law; but his humor, both in writing and singing songs, procured him access to the highest circles, and made him a favorite even at court. Addison, in the *Guardian*, relates that he remembered more than once to have seen Charles II leaning on Tom D'Urfey's shoulder and humming over a song with him. He was a strong Tory and Protestant, and it is said that his songs had considerable influence in strengthening the cause of his party. His dramatic pieces, numbering more than thirty, were well received, but were so licentious that none of them kept the stage after the dissolute age for which they were written. D'Urfey, by imprudence and extravagance, became poor as he grew old; and having prevailed on the managers of the playhouse to act his comedy of the *Plotting Sisters* for his benefit, Addison wrote two of his articles in the *Guardian*, giving a humorous account of his eccentricities, in order to procure him a full house. He died at an advanced age, and his songs, published in six volumes, under the title of *Pills to Purge Melancholy*, were reprinted in fac-simile in 1872.

IV.

The Later Restoration.

The comedy of the Restoration was chiefly the comedy of manners, and this was continued into the eighteenth century, with little diversity among comic writers. Most of the plays showed little regard to elegance of form, one of the first essentials of comedy, which without it sinks into a mere prosaic imitation of reality and loses its claim to art. It was at this time, moreover, that comedies first began to be written entirely in prose, and here was another form of weakness; for the language used by dramatists became merely that of every-day life, without attempt at polish or refinement. Shakespeare's comic scenes, it is true, were also written mainly in prose; but in mixed comedy, which has a serious or pathetic side, the prose, mingled with the elevated language of verse, serves to mark the contrast between vulgar and ideal sentiments.

Characteristics of English Comedy.

The dramatists of this period had not the art, or did not take sufficient pains, to make their plots com-

plicated. They are not adepts at entangling and disentangling their stories and characters, and their plans lack unity. The existence of a double, or even triple intrigue, has been acknowledged by English critics themselves. The inventions to which they have recourse are often anything but probable, and seldom possess the charm of novelty; they are also deficient in perspicuity and easy development; and worst of all, most of them are much too long. The authors overload their compositions with characters, and we can see no reason why they should not have divided them into several pieces. It is as if we were to compel to travel in the same stage-coach a greater number of persons, all strangers to each other, than there is properly room for; the journey becomes more inconvenient, and the entertainment not a whit more lively.

The great merit of the English comic poets of this period consists in the delineation of character; yet, though many have shown much talent, none have developed any peculiar genius for characterization. Even in this department the older poets—not only Shakespeare, but even Fletcher and Jonson—are superior to them. The former seldom possess the faculty of seizing the most hidden and involuntary emotions, and giving a comic expression to them; they usually draw merely the natural or assumed surface of their characters. Moreover, the same circumstance which in France, after Molière's time, was attended with such prejudicial effects, came here also into play. The comic muse, instead of becoming familiar with life in the middle and lower ranks, affected an air of distinc-

tion; she squeezed herself into courts, and endeavored to assume a resemblance of the beau monde. It was now no longer a national, but a London comedy, turning almost exclusively on fashionable love-suits and fashionable raillery, while the love-affairs are either disgusting or insipid, and the raillery is always puerile and destitute of wit. These comic writers may have accurately hit the tone of their time; in this they only did their duty; but they have reared a lamentable memorial of their age. In few periods has taste in the fine arts been at such a low ebb as about the close of the seventeenth and during the first half of the eighteenth century. The political machine kept its course; wars, negotiations and changes of states, give to this age a certain historical splendor; but comic poets and portrait-painters have revealed to us the secret of its pitifulness in copies of the dresses and imitation of the social tone. If we could now listen to the conversation of the beau monde of that day, it would appear to us as pettily affected and full of tasteless pretension as the hoops, the towering head-dresses, and high-heeled shoes of the women, and the huge perukes, cravats, wide sleeves and ribbon-knots of the men.

Not the least defect of these English comedies is their offensiveness. After all that we have read of the licentiousness of manners under Charles II, we are still lost in astonishment at the audacious ribaldry of Wycherley and Congreve. Decency is not merely violated in the grossest manner in single speeches, and frequently in the whole play; but in the character of the rake, the fashionable debauchee, a moral skepticism

is directly preached, and marriage is the constant subject of ridicule. Beaumont and Fletcher portrayed a vigorous, if immoral nature; but nothing can be more repulsive than rude depravity coupled with claims to higher refinement. Under Queen Anne manners became more decorous; and this may easily be traced in the comedies, in which we may perceive something like a gradation from the most unblushing indecency to a tolerable degree of morality, albeit from prescriptive fame, pieces kept possession of the stage such as no man in the present day would venture to bring out. It is a remarkable phenomenon, the causes of which are deserving of inquiry, that the English nation, in the latter half of the eighteenth century, passed all at once from the opposite way of thinking, to an almost over-scrupulous strictness of manners in social conversation, in the drama, in fiction and in the plastic arts.

Wycherley.

William Wycherley, the typical Restoration dramatist, and one of the greatest masters of the comedy of repartee, was born about 1640 at Clive, near Shrewsbury, where for several generations his family had been settled on an estate yielding about £600 a year. His youth was chiefly spent in France, whither, at the age of fifteen, he was sent to be educated amid the charmed circle of the *précieuses*. His friend, Major Pack, tells us that his hero "improved, with the greatest refinements, the extraordinary talents for which he was obliged to nature." Although the harmless affectations

of the Rambouillets and Montausiers, among whom he was thrown, are certainly not chargeable with the "refinements" of Wycherley's comedies—they seem to have been much more potent in regard to the refinements of his religion.

Though a man of strong intellectual power, Wycherley was a fine gentleman first, a responsible being afterward. Hence, it required no great persuasion to turn him from the Protestantism of his fathers to Romanism, as afterward, at Oxford, with the same easy alacrity, he turned back to Protestantism, under the manipulations of such an accomplished master in the art of conversion as Bishop Barlow. And if, as Macaulay hints, Wycherley's turning back to Romanism once more had something to do with the patronage and liberality of James II, this merely proves that the deity he worshipped was the deity of the polite world of his time—gentility. Moreover, as a professional fine gentleman, at a period when, as the genial Major Pack says, "the amours of Britain would furnish as diverting memoirs, if well related, as those of Nero's court writ by Petronius," Wycherley was obliged to be a loose liver. But, for all that, Wycherley's sobriquet, of "Manly Wycherley," seems to have been fairly earned by that frank and straightforward way of confronting life which, according to Pope and Swift, characterized also his brilliant successor, Vanbrugh.

The effort of Wycherley's to bring to Buckingham's notice the case of Samuel Butler, so shamefully neglected by the court which he had served, shows that even the writer of such heartless plays as *The Country*

Wife was familiar with generous impulses, while his uncompromising lines in defense of Buckingham, when the duke in his turn fell into trouble, show that the inventor of so shameless a fraud as that which forms the pivot of *The Plain Dealer* may in actual life possess the passion for fair-play which is believed to be a specially English quality. But among the ninety-nine religions with which Voltaire accredited England there is one whose permanency has never been shaken—the worship of gentility. To this Wycherley remained faithful to the day of his death; and if his relations to “that other world beyond,” which the Puritans had adopted, were liable to change with his environment, it was because that other world was altogether out of fashion.

Wycherley’s university career seems also to have been influenced by the same causes. Although Puritanism had certainly not contaminated the universities, yet English “quality and politeness”—to use Major Pack’s words—had always, since the Revolution, been rather ashamed of possessing too much learning. As a fellow-commoner of Queen’s college, Oxford, therefore he was entered only as a “student of philosophy,” which meant a student of nothing in particular; and he does not seem to have matriculated or to have taken a degree. Nor when, on quitting Oxford, he entered himself at the Middle Temple, did he give any more attention to the dry study of the law than was proper to one so warmly caressed “by the persons most eminent for their quality or politeness.”

Wycherley’s highest delights were in pleasure and

the stage, and in 1672 he produced at Drury Lane theatre his *Love in a Wood*. With regard to this comedy he told Pope, and repeated his statement until Pope believed him—at least until they quarrelled—that he wrote it the year before he went to Oxford. But we need not believe him; for the worst witness against a man is often himself. To pose as the wicked boy of genius has been the foolish ambition of many writers, but on inquiry it will generally be found that these ink-horn Lotharios are not nearly so wicked as they would have us suppose. When Wycherley charges himself with having written, as a boy of nineteen, scenes so callous and so depraved that even Barbara Palmer's appetite for profligacy was satisfied, there is no need to believe him. Indeed, there is every reason to discredit him; for the whole air and spirit of the piece belong to an experienced and hardened man of the world, and not to a boy who would fain pose as such. Not only in depravity of moral tone, but in real dramatic ripeness, some of the scenes are the strongest to be found among Wycherley's plays. If, indeed, a competent critic were asked to point out the finest touch in all his writings, he would probably select a speech in the third scene of the third act of this very comedy, where the vain, foolish and boastful rake Dapperwit, having taken his friend to see his mistress for the express purpose of advertising his lordship over her, is coolly denied and insolently repulsed. "I think," says Dapperwit, "women take inconstancy from me worse than from any man breathing." The remark is worthy of the hand that drew Malvolio; and certain it

is that no mere boy could have described, by this quiet touch, a vanity as impenetrable as the chain-armor which no shaft can pierce.

That the writer of such a play should at once become the talk of King Charles' court was inevitable; equally inevitable was it that the author of the song at the end of the first act, in praise of harlots and their offspring, should touch to its depth the soul of the duchess of Cleveland. Possibly Wycherley intended this famous song as a glorification of her Grace and her profession, for he seems to have been more delighted than surprised when, as he passed in his coach through Pall Mall, he heard the duchess address him from her carriage window as a "rascal," a "villain" and as a son of the very kind of lady his song had lauded. His answer was perfect in its readiness: "Madame, you have been pleased to bestow a title on me which belongs only to the fortunate." Perceiving that she received the compliment in the spirit in which it was meant, he lost no time in calling upon her, and was from that moment the recipient of those favors to which he alludes with pride in the dedication of the play to her. Voltaire's story that the titled dame used to go to Wycherley's chambers in the Temple disguised as a country wench, in a straw hat, shod with pattens and a basket in her hand, may be in part apocryphal, for certain it is that disguise was quite superfluous in the case of the mistress of Charles II. At least it shows how general was the opinion that, under such patronage, Wycherley's fortune as poet and dramatist, "eminent for his quality and politeness," was now assured.

In *The Relapse*, the third of Wycherley's plays, the mistake of introducing the element of farce damages a splendid comedy, but leaves it a capital play still. In *The Gentleman Dancing Master* this mingling of discordant elements destroys a piece that would never, under any circumstances, have been strong, but which abounds in animal spirits and is luminous here and there with true dramatic points. It is, however, on his two last comedies, *The Country Wife* and *The Plain Dealer*, that Wycherley's fame must rest as a master of that comedy of repartee which, inaugurated by Etherege, and afterward brought to perfection by Congreve and Vanbrugh, supplanted the humoristic comedy of the Elizabethans.

The Country Wife.

The Country Wife is so full of wit, ingenuity, animal spirits and lively humor that, had it not been for its motive—as repulsive to the most lax as to the most moral of readers—it would probably have survived as long as the acted drama retained a literary form in England. So strong, indeed, is the hand that could draw such a character as Marjory Pinchwife, as Sparkish and Horner, the latter the undoubted original of all those cool, impudent rakes with whom the English stage has since been familiar, that Wycherley is certainly entitled to a place alongside Congreve and Vanbrugh. It seems difficult to deny that Wycherley is the most vigorous of the three. In order to do justice to the merits of *The Country Wife* we have only to compare it with *The Country Girl*, afterward made famous

by the acting of Mrs. Jordan, the play in which Garrick endeavored to free Wycherley's comedy of its load of licentiousness by altering and sweetening the motive, as Voltaire afterward endeavored to purify the motive of *The Plain Dealer* in *La Prude*. While the two versions of Garrick and Voltaire are as dull as the *Æsop* of Bour-sault, the texture of Wycherley's dialogue would seem to scintillate with the changing hues of a shaken prism, were it not that the many-colored lights rather suggest the miasmatic radiance of a foul ditch shimmering in the sun.

The Plain Dealer.

And hardly inferior to *The Country Wife* is *The Plain Dealer*, of which Voltaire said: "I know of no comedy, ancient or modern, that has so much spirit." It is, indeed, impossible to overestimate the immense influence of this comedy, as regards manipulation of dialogue, upon all subsequent comedies of repartee, from those of Congreve and Vanbrugh to those of Douglas Jerrold and T. W. Robertson; and, as to characters, he who would trace the ancestry of Tony Lumpkin and Mrs. Hardecastle has only to turn to Jerry Blackaere and his mother, while Manly, for whom Wycherley's early patron, the duke of Montausier, sat, though he is perhaps overdone, has dominated this kind of stage character ever since. Few, perhaps, are aware how constantly the blunt sententious utterances of the last of these personages have reappeared, not on the stage alone, but in the novel and even in poetry. If the comedy itself is extinct, this is because a play

whose motive is monstrous and intolerable can only live in a monstrous and intolerable state of society; it is because Wycherley's genius was followed by Nemesis, who always dogs the footsteps of the defiler of literary art. But while we can excuse Macaulay's indignation at what he terms this "satyr-like defilement of art," the literary richness of the play almost nullifies the value of the criticism.

Probably none of the plays of this period have been so frequently quoted and adapted. Take, for instance, Manly's fine saying to Freeman in the first act: "I weigh the man, not his title, 'tis not the king's stamp can make the metal better or heavier." This we have in one of Burns' most famous couplets:

The rank is but the guinea stamp
The man's the gowd for a' that.

And so when, in *Tristram Shandy*, Sterne says: "Honors, like impressions upon coin, may give an ideal and local value to a bit of base metal, but gold and silver will pass all the world over without any other recommendation than their even weight." But it is in the fourth and fifth acts that the coruscations of Wycherley's comic genius are the most dazzling; it is there, also, that the licentiousness is most astounding. Not that the worst scenes in this play are really more wicked than those from other dramatists, but they are more seriously imagined, and being less humorous, they are more terribly and earnestly realistic. They form, indeed, a striking instance of the folly of the artist who

selects a story which cannot be dramatised without hurting the finer instincts of human nature.

Jeremy Collier.

How brilliant soever it may be, a comedy like Wycherley's strikes at the very root of the social compact upon which civilization rests. As to comparing the drama of the Restoration with that of the Elizabethans, Jeremy Collier did but a poor service to the cause he undertook to advocate when he set the occasional coarseness of Shakespeare side by side with the wickedness of Congreve and Vanbrugh. Yet it has been the fashion to speak of Collier's attack as being levelled against the immorality of the Restoration dramatists. It is nothing of the kind; it is an attack upon the English drama generally, with special reference to the case of Shakespeare. While dwelling upon that "noxious and highly immoral play, *Hamlet*," Collier actually leaves unscathed the author of *The Country Wife*, but fastens on Congreve and Vanbrugh, whose plays—profligate enough in all conscience—seem almost decent beside a comedy which savors ever of "the modish distemper."

That such a comedy as Wycherley's should have been received on the stage almost side by side with Shakespeare's heroines shows that in historic and social evolution, as in the evolution of organisms, change and progress are very far from being convertible terms. For the barbarism of the society depicted in his plays was, in the true sense of the word, far deeper and more brutal than any barbarism that has ever existed in Eng-

land within the historic period. If civilization has any meaning at all for the soul of man, the Englishman of Chaucer's time, the Anglo-Saxons of the Heptarchy, nay, those half-naked heroes, who in the dawn of English history clustered along the southern coast to defend it from the invasion of Cæsar, were far more civilized than that *race gangrenée*—the treacherous rakes, mercenary slaves and brazen strumpets of the court of Charles II, who did their best to substitute for the human passion of love, a passion known perhaps even to palæolithic man, the promiscuous intercourse of the beasts of the field. Yet Collier leaves Wycherley unassailed, and classes Vanbrugh and Congreve with Shakespeare!

Wycherley's Marriage.

It was after the success of *The Plain Dealer* that the turning point came in Wycherley's career. The great dream of all the men about town, as is shown in Wycherley's plays, was to marry a widow, young and handsome, a peer's daughter if possible, but in any event rich, and spend her money upon wine and women. While talking to a friend in a bookseller's shop at Tunbridge, Wycherley heard *The Plain Dealer* asked for by a lady who, in the person of the countess of Drogheda, answered all the above requirements. An introduction ensued, then love-making, then marriage—a secret marriage, for, fearing to lose the king's patronage and the income therefrom, Wycherley still thought it politic to pass as a bachelor. Whether because his countenance wore a pensive and subdued expression,

suggestive of a poet who had married a dowager countess and awakened to the situation, or whether treacherous confidants divulged his secret, does not appear; but the news of his marriage oozed out, it reached the royal ears, and deeply wounded the "merry monarch," who had intended to intrust to him the education of his son. Wycherley lost the appointment that was so nearly within his grasp; lost, indeed, the royal favor forever. He never had an opportunity of regaining it, for the countess seems to have really loved him, and *Love in a Wood* had proclaimed the writer to be the kind of husband whose virtue prospers best when closely guarded at the domestic hearth. Wherever he went the countess followed him, and when she did allow him to meet his boon companions it was in a tavern in Bow street, opposite his own house, and even there under certain protective conditions. In summer or in winter he was obliged to sit with the window open and the blinds up, so that his wife might see that the party included no member of a sex for which her husband's plays had advertised his partiality. She died at last, however, and left him the whole of her fortune.

But the title to the property was disputed; the costs of litigation were heavy—so heavy that the poet's father was unable or unwilling to come to his aid; and the result of his marrying the rich, beautiful and titled widow was that Wycherley was thrown into the Fleet prison. There he languished for seven years, being finally released by the liberality of James II, which, incredible as it seems, is too well authenticated to be challenged. James had been so much gratified by see-

ing *The Plain Dealer* acted that, finding a parallel between Manly's "manliness" and his own, such as no spectator had before discovered, he paid off Wycherley's execution creditor. Other debts still troubled him, however, and he never was released from his embarrassments, not even after succeeding to a life estate in the family property.

As we come to Wycherley's death we come to the worst allegation that has been made against him. At the age of seventy-five he married a young girl, and is said to have done so in order to spite his nephew, the next in succession, knowing that he himself must shortly die and that the jointure would impoverish the estate. No doubt it is true enough that he married the girl and died a few days afterward; but, if we consider that the lady was young and an heiress, or supposed to be an heiress, and if we further consider how difficult it was for an old gallant of Wycherley's personal vanity to realize his true physical condition, we may well suppose that, even if he talked about "marrying to spite his nephew," he did so as a cloak for other impulses, such as senile desire or senile cupidity, or a blending of both.

Vanbrugh.

Sir John Vanbrugh, dramatist and architect, was the son of a wealthy sugar-baker in Cheshire and grandson of a Protestant refugee of Ghent. From a passage in one of his letters it is supposed that he was born in the Bastille, though in what year is uncertain, probably in 1666. He was educated in France, but what

he learnt there, whether architecture or merely the art of good-fellowship, is a question that has been variously answered by those who, like Sir Joshua Reynolds, admire Blenheim and Castle Howard, and those who, like the wits of Vanbrugh's time, scoff at them. This, however, is certain, that after his return from the continent to England what he did was not to study architecture, but to work, with a gusto and success at the art of pleasing, which he found to be the true Aladdin's lamp of social life. His first step toward becoming a power in society was to enter the army, though, perhaps, had he begun life in any other way, his advance would have been just as rapid; for, strong as are social conditions, character is stronger still, and Vanbrugh's equipment—wit, tempered by good humor, a genuine feeling of comradeship, an exceedingly fine presence and a winsome face, according to Kneller's portrait—would, under any circumstances, have been irresistible.

One of the points of difference between the dialogue in Vanbrugh's and Congreve's comedies is this: we feel that the characters of the former talk as Vanbrugh must have talked; we feel that the characters of the latter talk, not as Congreve talked, but as Congreve wrote. We feel that, while such dazzling sword-play as Congreve's would in society have chilled, even as it illumined the air, talk so hearty, good-humored, frank and daring as we get in Vanbrugh's plays would have made the fortune of any man of fashion, made it as certainly at a Roman supper-party in the time of Augustus as at a London drinking-bout in the days of Queen Anne. It is no wonder that he was a favorite,

no wonder that the two best haters of the time, Swift and Pope, tried in vain to hate the "man of wit and honor." During the martial period of his life, Vanbrugh wrote the first sketches of the *Relapse* and the *Provoked Wife*. These he showed to Sir Thomas Skipworth, one of the shareholders of Drury Lane, and with fortunate results.

The Relapse.

In 1695 Vanbrugh was offered—whether through the court interest which he had secured or because he had really acquired a knowledge of architecture in France is not known—the post of secretary to the commission for endowing Greenwich hospital. He accepted it, and by way of fulfilling his functions as an architect completed his *Relapse, or Virtue in Danger*. It was produced, as a sequel to Colley Cibber's *Love's Last Shift*, at Drury Lane, in 1697. When a comic dramatist of the school of Wycherley confesses that the fine gentleman of his play, "drinking his mistresses' health in Nantes brandy from six in the morning to the time he waddled upon the stage in the evening, had toasted himself up to such a pitch of vigor" that something too outrageous even for such an audience seemed imminent, we may assume that he has enjoyed a satisfactory first night. The success was so marked that Montague, afterward Lord Halifax, asked at once for Vanbrugh's *Provoked Wife* for the theatre in Lincoln's Inn fields, and it was produced at that house in the following year. All that could be said in answer to those who condemned it on account of its unblushing

libertinism was that Sir John Brute is sufficiently brutal to drive any woman into rebellion, and that since the Restoration a wife's rebellion and a wife's adultery were synonymous terms. The play was a complete triumph, and long remained on the boards.

Æsop.

And now, having succeeded as a man of fashion, as an architectural commissioner, and as a comic dramatist of the school of Wycherley, Vanbrugh turned his attention to morals. Though *Æsop*, produced at Drury Lane, was an adaptation of Boursault's dramatic sermon on the same subject, it was an improvement on the French play. As usual with Vanbrugh, who never did things by halves, he surpassed the Frenchman on the very point where the Frenchman had been pronounced unsurpassable. Just as in the *Relapse*, when he aspired to be merry, his merriment had entirely eclipsed that of Cibber's play, so now, when he aspired to surpass the Frenchman in gravity, he achieved a kind of dullness, compared with which the owl-like gravity of Boursault was as the wit of Voltaire. In a word, the humor of the piece lies in the fact that it was written by the author of the *Relapse* and the *Provoked Wife*. The play ran for a week only. Vanbrugh, accepting the failure with his usual good temper, seems then to have turned his attention completely to architecture; for the adaptation in 1700 of the *Pilgrim* of Beaumont and Fletcher, and the production in 1702 of *A False Friend*, could hardly have engaged his serious efforts at all, so

perfunctory are they and so inferior to all that he had done before.

Vanbrugh's Theatre.

Castle Howard, in Yorkshire, which he had built for the earl of Carlisle, was a great success so far as pleasing his patron, who as a reward gave him yet another opening in life by presenting him—the most ignorant man, perhaps, in England of heraldry—with the tabard of Clarencieux king-at-arms. But, if the dangerous moment in every man's life is when he has just scored a brilliant success, it is especially so with genial glowing natures like Vanbrugh's. It seems to have been the success of Castle Howard that caused him to entertain the rash project of building a theatre, from his own design, for the acting of his own plays. The joyous confidence with which, having persuaded thirty people in the fashionable world to aid him in finding the money, and Congreve to aid him in finding the plays, he began to build in perfect unconsciousness of the danger before him, is the only passage in his life which may be called pathetic, save, of course, his struggle with the "wicked woman of Marlborough." No doubt any architect who builds a theatre is always in danger of letting his ideas run riot in the wide field of experiment, but he who builds a theatre for his own plays seems doomed by the malice aforethought of fate. The magnitude of Vanbrugh's architectural ideas grew as the work went on, and with the ideas the structure grew till a theatre meant for the delicate bijouterie work of polite comedy seemed to be assuming the pro-

portions of the Roman Colosseum. Whether Congreve endeavored to put a check upon his friend's architectural and dramatic fervor does not appear; but it must be remembered that not only Vanbrugh's plays, but his own were to be acted there, and, although Congreve was possessed of great sagacity, no man, not even he who pretended to let his gentility above his genius, is sagacious when confronted by the surpassing excellence of his own works.

When at length the time came to test the acoustics of the building, it was found to be sadly defective, though what changes were made to rectify the errors of structure is not recorded. The theatre was opened to the public with an Italian opera, which was followed by three of Molière's comedies, and these by the *Confederacy*, Vanbrugh's masterpiece on the whole, though perhaps its finest scenes are not equal to those in the *Relapse*.

Congreve.

William Congreve, one of the greatest English masters of pure comedy, was born, according to the latest and likeliest accounts, in 1670; according to the inscription on his monument, in 1672; and whether in England or in Ireland, has likewise been matter of doubt and dispute. To Ireland, at all events, is due the credit of his education—as a schoolboy at Kilkenny, and as an under-graduate at Dublin. From college he came to London, and was entered as a student of law at the Middle Temple. The first fruits of his authorship appeared under the boyish pseudonym of Cleophil,

in the form of a novel, whose existence is now remembered only through the unabashed avowal of so austere a moralist as Dr. Johnson, that he "would rather praise it than read it."

The Old Bachelor.

In 1693 Congreve's real career began with the brilliant production and instant success of his first comedy, *The Old Bachelor*, under the generous auspices of Dryden. The discrowned laureate had never, he said, seen such a first day; and indeed the grace of the dialogue was as yet only to be matched by the last and best work of Etherege, standing, as till then it had done, alone among the barefaced brutalities of Wycherley and Shadwell.

The Double Dealer.

The gift of one place and the reversion of another were the solid fruits of this splendid success. Next year a better play from the same hand met with worse fortune on the stage, and with yet higher honor from the first living poet of his nation. The noble verses, as faultless in the expression as reckless in the extravagance of their approbation, prefixed by Dryden to *The Double Dealer*, must naturally have supported the younger poet, if indeed such support was required, against the momentary annoyance of assailants whose passing clamor left uninjured and secure the fame of his second comedy. The following year witnessed the crowning triumph of his art and life, in the appearance

of *Love for Love*. Two years later his ambition rather than his genius adventured on the field of tragedy, and *The Mourning Bride* began such a long career of good fortune as in earlier or later times would have been impossible for a far better work. Next he attempted, without his usual success, a reply to the attack of Jeremy Collier "on the immorality and profaneness of the English stage"—an attack which, however malignant, was not discreditable to the assailant.

Art itself, more than anything else, had been outraged and degraded by the recent school of the Restoration; and the comic work of Congreve, though different rather in kind than in degree from the bestial and blatant license of his immediate precursors, was inevitably for a time involved in the sentence passed upon the comic work of men in all ways his inferiors. The true and triumphant answer to all possible attacks of honest men or liars, brave men or cowards, was then, as ever, to be given by the production of work unsailable alike by fair means or foul, by frank impeachment or furtive imputation. Congreve thus replied to Collier with the crowning work of his genius, a well-nigh perfect masterpiece of English comedy. The one play in our language which may fairly claim a place beside or but just beneath the mightiest work of Molière is *The Way of the World*. But on the stage, which had recently acclaimed with uncritical applause the author's more questionable appearance in the field of tragedy, this final and flawless evidence of his incomparable powers met with a rejection then and ever since inexplicable. It may, in truth, be said of Congreve, as of

Shakespeare and other great dramatists of olden times, that he was not appreciated until after his death. Such, however, was the fate of Milton and others whom the nation loves.

Death.

During the twenty-eight years which remained to him, Congreve produced little beyond a volume of fugitive verses. His even course of good fortune under Whig and Tory governments alike was counterweighed by the physical infirmities of gout and failing sight. He died in 1729, in consequence of an injury received on a journey to Bath by the upsetting of his carriage, and he was buried in Westminster abbey, after lying in state in the Jerusalem chamber. He bequeathed the bulk of his fortune to the chief friend of his last years, Henrietta, duchess of Marlborough, daughter of the great duke, and not to his family, which, according to Johnson, was then in difficulties, or to Mrs. Bracegirdle, the actress, with whom he had lived longer on intimate terms than with any other mistress or friend, but who inherited by his will only £200.

Reputation.

The fame of Congreve is founded mainly on three of his plays. His first comedy was little more than a brilliant study after such models as were eclipsed by this earliest effort of their imitator; and tragedy under his hands appears roughed and wrinkled. But his three great comedies are more than enough to sustain his

reputation. Were it not for these we would have no samples to show of comedy in its purest and highest form. Ben Jonson, who alone attempted to introduce it by way of reform among the mixed work of a time when comedy and tragedy were as inextricably blended on the stage as in actual life, failed to give the requisite ease and the indispensable grace of comic life and movement. Of Congreve's immediate predecessors, whose aim had been to raise on French foundations a new English fabric of simple and unmixed comedy, Wycherley was of too base metal and Etherege was of metal too light to be weighed against him; and besides theirs no other or finer coin was current than the crude British ore of Shadwell's coarse and burly talent. Borrowing a metaphor from Landor, we may say that a limb of Molière would have sufficed to make a Congreve, a limb of Congreve would have sufficed to make a Sheridan. The broad and robust humor of Vanbrugh's admirable comedies gives him a place on the master's right hand; on the left stands Farquhar, whose bright and delicate genius is to Congreve's as moonlight unto sunlight. No English writer has so nearly touched the skirts of Molière; but even his splendid intelligence is wanting in those deeper and subtler qualities which give to the great French dramatist a rank second only to Shakespeare.

Farquhar.

George Farquhar, the successor of Wycherley and Congreve, was the son of an Irish clergyman, London-

derry being his native city and Trinity college, Dublin, his alma mater. He was entered as a sizar or servitor, a class of poor scholars, who were compelled to wear a peculiar dress and perform menial offices. These are no longer exacted from their successors, but Goldsmith, sixty years after Farquhar's admission; had to submit to the same humiliations—to sweep out the college courts, to carry up the fellows' dinner to table, and to wait in the hall till the fellows had dined. It certainly implied a contradiction, as Goldsmith observed, for men to be "at once learning the liberal arts, and at the same time treated as slaves," and neither in the case of Farquhar nor of Goldsmith was the system attended with favorable results. The former soon broke away from his studies, attached himself to a strolling company of players, and after a single season appeared as an actor on the Dublin stage. He had the advantage of a good person, though with a weak voice, but was timid and sensitive, and an accident which happened to him when he had only been a twelvemonth on the boards made him resolve to quit the profession. When performing the part of Guyomar in Dryden's *Indian Emperor*, he had omitted to exchange his sword for a foil, and in a fencing scene wounded a brother performer so severely that his life was endangered. Farquhar never again returned to the stage. The earl of Orrery gave him a lieutenancy in his regiment then in Ireland, and as a soldier Farquhar is said to have given proofs of his courage and good conduct, though none are recorded. Even in his own letters, written from Holland at this time, no mention is made of his military services. In

the reports of his superior officers, however, there is nothing to his discredit.

The Constant Couple.

While yet a minor Farquhar appeared as a dramatist, producing his comedy of *Love and a Bottle* at Drury Lane when twenty years of age. Its success far exceeded his expectations, and his next comedy, *The Constant Couple*, was still more favorably received. Wilks, a popular comedian and a special friend of Farquhar's, by his performance of the part of Sir Harry Wildair contributed very much to the popularity of the play. "He *made* the part," says Farquhar; but it was the lively acting of the beautiful Peggy Woffington, and the glee and spirit which Mrs. Jordan afterward threw into it, which gave to Sir Harry Wildair a permanent foothold on the stage, his strong animal spirits and untamable vivacity recommending him, for more than a century, to the play-going public.

Sir Harry Wildair.

As a sequel to *The Constant Couple*, Farquhar brought out *Sir Harry Wildair*, with the acting of Wilks again a strong attraction; but like all continuations—that of *Don Quixote* alone excepted—the second part was far inferior to the first. Leigh Hunt tells us that Mrs. Oldfield performed to perfection the character of the heroine, Lady Lurewell. It is even said that she took to the stage by Farquhar's advice, and

certain it is that she played in the two last and best of his comedies. For a time Mrs. Oldfield became the theatrical idol of the day; her exquisite acting and lady-like carriage were the delight of her contemporaries, and her beauty and generosity found innumerable eulogists—

Engaging Oldfield, who, with grace and ease,
Could join the arts to ruin and to please.

In 1702 Farquhar published a volume of "Miscellanies"—poems, letters and a discourse on comedy. The poems are below mediocrity and the letters are written in the overstrained style of gallantry and smartness which was then fashionable and considered witty. In one he gives a lady a picture of himself, "drawn from the life." His mind, he says, was generally dressed, like his person, in black; he was taken for an easy-natured man by his own sex, and an ill-natured clown by the ladies; strangers had a worse opinion of him than he deserved, but this was recompensed by the opinion of his acquaintance, which was above his desert. Self-portraiture is seldom faithful, but we may conclude from this outline that the young dramatist was somewhat grave and reserved, and wanting in address for general society. He was liveliest with the pen in his hand. The discourse on comedy is more worthy of the author than his poems or letters. In it he defends the English disregard of the dramatic unities. "The rules of English comedy," he says, "don't lie in the compass of Aristotle or his followers, but in the pit,

box and galleries." Soon Farquhar had another comedy on the stage—*The Inconstant, or the Way to Win Him*—the lint of which, he says, he took from Fletcher's *Wild Goose Chase*, but was charged with spoiling the original. The poetry of Fletcher certainly evaporates when its scenes are transmuted into the prose dialogue of Farquhar.

Farquhar's Wife.

About this time the dramatist was betrayed into what was perhaps the greatest blunder of his life. A lady conceived a violent passion for him, and, though penniless like himself, contrived to circulate a report that she was possessed of a large fortune. Farquhar snapped at the gilded bait. He married the lady, and found too late that he had been deceived. It is related, however, that he had the magnanimity to pardon a deception which must have appeared a compliment to his genius, and in truth there was something to forgive on his own part for having been so readily entrapped, contrary to all the rules of love and the drama. Increased exertion, however, was necessary, and in 1704 he produced *The Stage Coach*, a piece which he adapted from the French, in conjunction with Anthony Motteux, a clever playwright and essayist, and remarkable as having, though a Frenchman, given to the world the best English translation of *Don Quixote*. Three more comedies were written before Farquhar's career was sadly closed at the age of thirty—*The Twin Rivals*, *The Recruiting Officer* and *The Beaux Stratagem*. The last

two are vastly superior to Farquhar's other plays, and are the works by which he is now remembered.

The Beaux Stratagem was written in six weeks, while death was impending over its author. Before he had finished the second act he knew that he was stricken with a mortal illness, but it was necessary to persevere to be "consumedly lively" to the end; for he had received in advance £30 for the copyright. The play was brought on the stage, and Farquhar lived to have his third night, as was the custom, and an extra benefit on the day, it is said, when he died. He left his two children to the care of his friend Wilks, to whom he writes:

"Dear Bob: I have nothing to leave thee to perpetuate my memory but two helpless girls. Look upon them sometimes and think of him that was to the last moment of his life thine,

"GEORGE FARQUHAR."

Wilks obtained a benefit at the theatre for the dramatist's widow, and the daughters had each a pension of £30 a year, which one of them was receiving as late as 1764.

Farquhar's Works.

The plots of Farquhar's comedies are skillfully conducted and evolved; his situations are well chosen and his dialogues are full of life and spirit. To the polished wit and brilliancy of Congreve he has no pretension. His scenes are light and sketchy, and his characters altogether on a lower level than Congreve's, but they

are quite equal to them in stage effect. He has also several distinct and original characters which long charmed on the stage, while the incidents with which they are mixed—the unexpected encounters, adventures, artifices and disguises—are irresistibly comic and attractive in representation. Pope considered Farquhar a mere farce writer, while Goldsmith, who evidently adopted him as a model, preferred him to Congreve. On the stage, with good actors, he might be so preferred, but never in the library. He had the advantage of being less licentious than Congreve, for he was the cleanest comic writer of his age. Love intrigues then formed the chief business of comedy, and in the management of them the homely domestic virtues that form the happiness and cement of society were disregarded or made the subject of ridicule.

Mrs. Centlivre.

One of the plays of this period which survive in literature and in an occasional performance is *A Bold Stroke for a Wife*, a comedy which is given elsewhere. At first an actress, Susanna Freeman took for her third husband Joseph Centlivre, Queen Anne's chief cook. She was a brilliant woman and enjoyed the friendship of the dramatists of the time. The name of Simon Pure, one of the characters in this play, has long become proverbial.

EVERY MAN IN HIS HUMOR

A COMEDY

BY

BEN JONSON.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

KITELY.

OLD KNOWELL.

YOUNG KNOWELL.

WELLBRED.

MASTER STEPHEN.

MASTER MATTHEW.

JUSTICE CLEMENT.

DOWNRIGHT.

CAPTAIN BOBADIL.

CASH.

FORMAL.

COB.

BRAINWORM.

MRS. KITELY.

BRIDGET.

COB'S WIFE.

PRELUDE.

Every Man in His Humor has always been considered Ben Jonson's masterpiece, and was a stage favorite from the time it was first acted, in 1598, by the Lord Chamberlain's company, until after the Restoration. Even yet it is sometimes acted as a curiosity, though much more frequently read, and is of additional interest from the fact that Shakespeare appeared in the character of Old Knowell. Jonson's plays, it may be remarked, were much preferred at the time to those of his great contemporary. The comedy was revived by Garrick in 1751, when he took the part of Kitely. This was afterward played by Kemble, who made it, as is said, "a terrific picture of jealousy working in a bosom neither refined by sentiment nor elevated by heroism."

ACT I. SCENE I.

A courtyard before Knowell's house. Enter Knowell and Brainworm.

Knowell.—A goodly day toward, and a fresh morning, Brainworm,

Call up young master. Bid him rise, sir.

Tell him I have some business to employ him.

Brainworm.—I will, sir, presently.

Kno.—But hear you, sirrah,
If he be at his book, disturb him not.

Brain.—Well, sir. (Exit into house.)

Kno.—How happy, yet, should I esteem myself,
Could I, by any practice, wean the boy
From one vain course of study he affects.
He is a scholar, if a man may trust
The liberal voice of fame in her report,
Of good account in both our universities;
Either of which hath favor'd him with graces:
But their indulgence must not spring in me
A fond opinion that he cannot err.

Enter Master Stephen.

Cousin Stephen,
What news with you, that you are here so early?

Stephen.—Nothing, but e'en come to see how you do, uncle.

Kno.—That's kindly done: you are welcome, coz.

Step.—Ay, I know that, sir; I would not ha' come else.
How doth my cousin Edward, uncle?

Kno.—Oh, well, coz, go in and see; I doubt he be scarcely stirring yet.

Step.—Uncle, afore I go in, can you tell me an' he have e'er a book of the sciences of hawking and hunting? I would fain borrow it.

Kno.—Why, I hope you will not a-hawking, now, will you?

Step.—No wosse, but I'll practice against the next year, uncle. I have bought me a hawk, and a hood, and bells, and all; I lack nothing but a book to keep it by.

Kno.—Oh, most ridiculous!

Step.—Nay, look you now, you are angry, uncle. Why, you know, an' a man have not skill in the hawking and hunting languages nowadays, I'll not give a rush for him. They are more studied than the Greek or the Latin. What do you talk on it? Because I dwell at Hogsden, I shall keep company with none but the citizens that come a-ducking to Islington ponds! A fine jest, i'faith! A gentleman mun show himself like a gentleman. I know what I have to do; I am no novice.

Kno.—You are a prodigal, absurd coxcomb: go to!
Nay, never look at me, it's I that speak.
Take it as you will, sir, I'll not flatter you.
Ha' you not yet found means enow to waste
That which your friends have left you, but you must
Go cast away your money on a kite;
And know not how to keep it when you've done?
Oh, it's comely! This will make you a gentleman!
Well, cousin, well! I see you are e'en past hope
Of all reclaim. Ay, so, now you're told on it,
You look another way.

Step.—What would you ha' me do?

Kno.—What would I have you do! I'll tell you, kinsman;
Learn to be wise, and practise how to thrive;
That would I have thee do: and not to spend
Your coin on every bauble that you fancy,
Or every foolish brain that humors you.

Enter a servant.

Servant.—'Save you, gentlemen.

Step.—Nay, we do not stand much on our gentility, friend;
and I assure you, mine uncle here is a man of a thousand a
year, Middlesex land; he has but one son in all the world; I
am his next heir at the common law, Master Stephen, as simple
as I stand here, if my cousin die, as there's hope he will. I
have a pretty living o' my own too, beside, hard by here.

Serv.—In good time, sir.

Step.—In good time, sir! Why? And in very good time,
sir. You do not flout, friend, do you?

Serv.—Not I, sir.

Step.—Not you, sir? You were not best, sir; an' you
should, here be them can perceive it, and that quickly, too.
And they can give it again, soundly, too, an' need be.

Serv.—Why, sir, let this satisfy you; good faith, I had no
such intent.

Step.—Sir, an' I thought you had, I would talk with you,
and that presently.

Serv.—Good Master Stephen, so you may, sir, at your pleasure.

Step.—And so I would, sir, good my saucy companion, an' you were out o' my uncle's ground, I can tell you; though I do not stand upon my gentility neither in't.

Kno.—Cousin! cousin Will this ne'er be left?

Step.—Whorson base fellow! A mechanical serving man! By this cudgel, and 'twere not for shame, I would——

Kno.—What would you do, you peremptory gull?

If you cannot be quiet, get you hence.

You see the honest man demeans himself

Modestly toward you, giving no reply

To your unseason'd quarrelling.

Go, get you in; 'fore heaven, I am ashamed

Thou hast a kinsman's interest in me.

(Exit Stephen into house.)

Serv.—I pray you, sir, is this Master Knowell's house?

Kno.—Yes, marry, is't, sir.

Serv.—I should inquire for a gentleman here, one Master Edward Knowell; do you know any such, sir, I pray you?

Kno.—I should forget myself else, sir.

Serv.—Are you the gentleman? Cry you mercy, sir, I was required by a gentleman i' the city, as I rode out at this end of the town, to deliver you this letter, sir.

Kno.—To me, sir. (Reads.) "To his most selected friend, Master Edward Knowell." What might the gentleman's name be, sir, that sent it?

Serv.—One Master Wellbred, sir.

Kno.—Master Wellbred! A young gentleman, is he not?

Serv.—The same, sir; Master Kitely married his sister: the rich merchant i' the Old Jewry.

Kno.—You say very true. Brainworm!

Enter Brainworm from house.

Brainworm.—Sir.

Kno.—Make this honest friend drink here. Pray you go in.
(Exeunt.)

This letter is directed to my son:
Yet I am Edward Knowell too, and may,
With the safe conscience of good manners, use
The fellow's error to my satisfaction.
What have we here? What's this? (Reads.)

"Why, Ned, I beseech, hast thou forsworn all thy friends i' the Old Jewry? or dost thou think us all Jews that inhabit there? Leave thy vigilant father alone, to number over his green apricots, evening and morning, o' the northwest wall: an' I had been his son, I had saved him the labor long since; if taking in all the young wenches that pass by at the back door, and coddling every kernel of the fruit for 'em would ha' served. But pr'ythee, come over to me quickly, this morning: I have such a present for thee, our Turkey company never sent the like to the Grand Signior. One is a rhymers, sir, o' your own batch, your own leaven; but doth think himself poet major the town; willing to be shown, and worthy to be seen. The other—I will not venture his description with you till you come, because I would ha' you make hither with an appetite. If the worst of 'em be not worth your journey, draw your bill of charges, as unconscionable as any Guildhall verdict will give it you, and you shall be allowed your viaticum.

"From the Windmill."

From the burdello, it might come as well!
The spittal! Is this the man
My son hath sung so for the happiest wit,
The choicest brain the times have sent us forth?
I know not what he may be in the arts,
Nor what in schools; but surely, for his manners,
I judge him a profane and dissolute wretch.
Brainworm!

Enter Brainworm from house.

Brainworm.—Sir.

Kno.—Is the fellow gone that brought this letter?

Brain.—Yes, sir, a pretty while since.

Kno.—And where's your young master?

Brain.—In his chamber, sir.

Kno.—He spake not with the fellow, did he?

Brain.—No, sir, he saw him not.

Kno.—Take you this letter, seal it, and deliver it my son;
But with no notice that I have open'd it, on your life.

Brain.—O Lord, sir, that were a jest indeed!

Kno.—I am resolved I will not stop his journey,
Nor practice any violent means to stay
The unbridled course of youth in him: for that,
Restrain'd, grows more impatient:
There is a way of winning more by love,
And urging of the modesty, than fear.
Force works on servile natures, not the free.
He that's compell'd to goodness may be good,
But 'tis but for that fit: where others, drawn
By softness and example, get a habit.
Then if they stray, but warn 'em, and, the same
They would for virtue do, they'll do for shame.

(*Exeunt.*)

SCENE II.

Young Knowell's study. Enter Young Knowell and Brainworm.

Young Knowell.—Did he open it, say'st thou?

Brainworm.—Yes, o' my word, sir, and read the contents.

Y. Kno.—That's bad. What countenance, pray thee, made he i' the reading of it? Was he angry, or pleased?

Brain.—Nay, sir, I saw him not read it, nor open it, I assure your worship.

Y. Kno.—No! How know'st thou, then, that he did either?

Brain.—Marry, sir, because he charged me, on my life, to tell nobody that he opened it: which, unless he had done, he would never fear to have it revealed.

Y. Kno.—That's true: well, I thank thee, Brainworm.

(*Exit.*)

Enter Master Stephen.

Stephen.—Oh, Brainworm, didst thou not see a fellow here, in a what-sha'-call him doublet? He brought mine uncle a letter e'en now.

Brain.—Yes, Master Stephen, what of him?

Step.—Oh! I ha' such a mind to beat him.

Brain.—Faith, he is not of that mind: he is gone, Master Stephen.

Step.—Gone! which way? When went he? How long since?

Brain.—He is rid hence. He took horse at the street door.

Step.—And I stayed i' the fields! Whorson, Scanderbeg rogue! Oh that I had but a horse to fetch him back again!

Brain.—Why, you may ha' my master's gelding to save your longing, sir.

Step.—But I have no boots, that's the spite on't.

Brain.—Why, a fine wisp of hay, rolled hard, Master Stephen.

Step.—No, faith, it's no boot to follow him now; let him e'en go and hang. Pr'ythee, help to truss me a little. He does so vex me——

Brain.—You'll be worse vexed, when you are trussed, Master Stephen. Best keep unbraced, and walk yourself till you be cold; your choler may founder you else.

Step.—How dost thou like my leg, Brainworm?

Brain.—A very good leg, Master Stephen; but the woollen stocking does not commend it so well.

Step.—Foh, the stockings be good enough, now summer is coming on, for the dust: I'll have a pair of silk against the winter, that I go to dwell i' the town. I think my leg would show in a silk hose.

Brain.—Believe me, Master Stephen, rarely well.

Step.—In sadness, I think it would; I have a reasonable good leg.

Brain.—You have an excellent good leg, Master Stephen; but I cannot stay to praise it longer now: I am very sorry for't.

(Exit.)

Step.—Another time will serve, Brainworm.

Enter Young Knowell.

Young Knowell.—Ha! ha! ha!

Step.—I hope he laughs not at me; an' he do——

Y. Kno.—Here was a letter, indeed, to be intercepted by a man's father! He cannot but think most virtuously both of me and the sender, sure.—What! my wise cousin! Nay, then I'll furnish our feast with one gull tow'rd the mess. He writes to me of a brace, and here's one, that's three; O for a fourth!

Step.—O, now I see who he laughs at. He laughs at somebody in that letter. By this good light, an' he had laugh'd at me——

Y. Kno.—How now, cousin Stephen, melancholy?

Step.—Yes, a little. I thought you had laugh'd at me, cousin.

Y. Kno.—Why, what an' I had, coz, what would you ha' done?

Step.—By this light, I would ha' told my uncle.

Y. Kno.—Nay, if you would ha' told your uncle, I did laugh at you, coz.

Step.—Did you, indeed?

Y. Kno.—Yes, indeed.

Step.—Why, then——

Y. Kno.—What then?

Step.—I am satisfied; it is sufficient.

Y. Kno.—Why, be so, gentle coz. And I pray you let me entreat a courtesy of you. I am sent for this morning by a friend i' the Old Jewry, to come to him; will you bear me company? I protest it is not to draw you into bond, or any plot, coz.

Step.—Sir, that's all one, an' 'twere; you shall command me twice so far, to do you good in such a matter. Do you think I would leave you? I protest——

Y. Kno.—No, no; you shall not protest, coz.

Step.—By my fackins, but I will, by your leave; I'll protest more to my friend than I'll speak of at this time.

Y. Kno.—You speak very well, coz.

Step.—Nay, not so, neither; you shall pardon me; but I speak to serve my turn.

Y. Kno.—Your turn, coz! Do you know what you say? A gentleman of your sort, parts, carriage, and estimation, to talk o' your turn. Come, come, wrong not the quality of your desert with looking downward, coz; but hold up your head, so; and let the idea of what you are be portray'd i' your face, that men may read i' your physiognomy: "Here, within this place, is to be seen the true and accomplished monster, or miracle of nature," which is all one. What think you of this, coz?

Step.—Why, I do think of it; and I will be more proud and melancholy, and gentlemanlike, than I have been, I'll assure you.

Y. Kno.—Why, that's resolute, Master Stephen! Now, if I can but hold him up to his height, as it is happily begun, it will do well for a suburb-humor: we may hap have a match with the city, and play him for forty pounds. Come, coz.

Step.—I will follow you.

Y. Kno.—Follow me! you must go before.

Step.—Nay, an' I must, I will. Pray you, show me, good cousin.
(Exeunt.)

SCENE III.

The street before Cob's house. Enter Master Matthew.

Matthew.—I think this be the house. What hoa!

Enter Cob from the house.

Cob.—Who's there? O, Master Matthew! gi' your worship good morrow.

Mat.—What, Cob! How dost thou, good Cob? Dost thou inhabit here, Cob?

Cob.—Ay, sir, I and my lineage ha' kept a poor house here in our days.

Mat.—Cob, canst thou show me of a gentleman, one Captain BoBadil, where his lodging is?

Cob.—O, my guest, sir, you mean!

Mat.—Thy guest! alas! ha! ha!

Cob.—Why do you laugh, sir? Do you not mean Captain Bobadil?

Mat.—Cob, pray thee, advise thyself well; do not wrong the gentleman and thyself too. I dare be sworn he scorns thy house. He! he lodge in such a base, obscure place as thy house! Tut, I know his disposition so well, he would not lie in thy bed, if thou'dst gi' it him.

Cob.—I will not give it him, though, sir. Mass, I thought somewhat was in't we could not get him to bed all night! Well, sir, though he lie not o' my bed, he lies o' my bench. An't please you to go up, sir, you shall find him with two cushions under his head, and his cloak wrapped about him, as though he had neither won nor lost; and yet, I warrant he ne'er cast better in his life than he has done to-night.

Mat.—Why, was he drunk?

Cob.—Drunk, sir! you hear not me say so. Perhaps he swallowed a tavern-token, or some such device, sir; I have nothing to do withal. I deal with water and not with wine. Gi' me my bucket there, ho. God b'wi' you, sir, it's six o'clock; I should ha' carried two turns by this. What ho! my stopple! me.

Mat.—Lie in a water-bearer's house! A gentleman of his havings! Well, I'll tell him my mind.

Cob.—What, Tib, show this gentleman up to the captain. (Tib shows Master Matthew into the house.) You should ha' some now, would take this Mr. Matthew to be a gentleman, at least. His father is an honest man, a worshipful fish-monger, and so forth; and now does he creep and wriggle into acquaintance with all the brave gallants about the town, such as my guest is. O, my guest is a fine man! he does swear the legiblest of any man christened: by St. George—the foot of Pharaoh—the body of me—as I am a gentleman and a soldier; such dainty oaths! and withal, he does this same filthy roguish tobacco, the finest and cleanliest! it would do a man good to see the fume come forth out at's tonnoils! Well, he owes me forty shillings, my wife lent him out of her purse by sixpence at a time, besides his lodging; I would I had it. I shall ha' it, he says, the next action.

Helter-skelter, hang sorrow, care'll kill a cat, up-tail all, and
a louse for the hangman. (Exit into house.)

SCENE IV.

A room in Cob's house. Bobadil discovered upon a bench.

Enter Tib.

Bobadil.—Hostess! Hostess!

Tib.—What say you, sir?

Bob.—A cup of thy small-beer, sweet hostess.

Tib.—Sir, there's a gentleman below, would speak with
you.

Bob.—A gentleman! 'Odso, I am not within.

Tib.—My husband told him you were, sir.

Bob.—What a plague—what meant he?

Matthew.—(Within.) Captain Bobadil!

Bob.—Who's there?—Take away the basin, good hostess.
Come up, sir.

Tib.—He would desire you to come up, sir. You come
into a cleanly house here. (Exit.)

Enter Master Matthew.

Mat.—'Save you, sir; 'save you, captain.

Bob.—Gentle Master Matthew! Is it you, sir? Please
you sit down.

Mat.—Thank you, good captain; you may see I am some-
what audacious.

Bob.—Not so, sir. I was requested to supper, last night,
by some sort of gallants, where you were wished for, and
drank to, I assure you.

Mat.—Vouchsafe me by whom, good captain.

Bob.—Marry, by young Wellbred, and others. Why,
hostess! a stool here for this gentleman.

Mat.—No haste, sir, 'tis very well.

Bob.—Body of me! It was so late ere we parted last night,
I can scarce open my eyes yet; I was but new risen, as you
came. How passes the day abroad, sir? you can tell.

Mat.—Faith, some half hour to seven. Now, trust me, you have an exceeding fine lodging here, very neat, and private!

Bob.—Ay, sir: I pray you, Master Matthew, in any case, possess no gentleman of our acquaintance with notice of my lodging.

Mat.—Who, I, sir? No.

Bob.—Not that I need to care who know it, for the cabin is convenient; but in regard I would not be too popular and generally visited, as some are.

Mat.—True, captain; I conceive you.

Bob.—For, do you see, sir, by the heart of valor in me, except it be to some peculiar and choice spirits, to whom I am extraordinarily engaged, as yourself, or so, I could not extend thus far.

Mat.—O Lord, sir! I resolve so.

(Pulls out a paper, and reads.)

Bob.—I confess, I love a cleanly and quiet privacy, above all the tumult and roar of fortune. What new piece ha' you there? Read it.

Mat.—(Reads.) "To thee, the purest object of my sense,
The most refined essence Heaven covers,
Send I these lines, wherein I do commence
The happy state of turtle-billing lovers."

Bob.—'Tis good; proceed, proceed. Where's this?

Mat.—This, sir? a toy o' mine own, in my non-age, the infancy of my muses. But, when will you come and see my study? Good faith, I can show you some very good things I have done of late——

Bob.—What, all as good as that?

Mat.—That boot becomes your leg passing well, captain, methinks.

Bob.—So, so; it's the fashion gentlemen now use.

Mat.—Troth, captain, and now you speak o' the fashion, Master Wellbred's elder brother and I are fallen out exceedingly; the other day I happened to enter into some discourse of a hanger, which, I assure you, both for fashion and workmanship, was most peremptory beautiful and gentlemanlike:

yet he condemn'd and cried it down for the most pied and ridiculous that ever he saw.

Bob.—Squire Downright, the half-brother, was't not?

Mat.—Ay, sir, George Downright.

Bob.—Hang him, rook! He! Why, he has no more judgment than a malt horse. By St. George, I wonder you'd lose a thought upon such an animal! The most peremptory absurd clown of Christendom this day he is holden. I protest to you, as I am a gentleman and a soldier, I ne'er changed words with his like. By his discourse, he should eat nothing but hay. He was born for the manger, pannier, or packsaddle! He has not so much as a good phrase in his belly; but all old iron, and rusty proverbs! A good commodity for some smith to make hobnails of.

Mat.—Ay, and he thinks to carry it away with his manhood still, where he comes. He brags he will gi' me the bastinado, as I hear.

Bob.—How! He the bastinado! How came he by that word, trow?

Mat.—Nay, indeed, he said cudgel me: I term'd it so, for my more grace.

Bob.—That may be: for I was sure it was none of his word. But when? When said he so?

Mat.—Faith, yesterday, they say: a young gallant friend of mine told me so.

Bob.—By the foot of Pharoah, an' 'twere my case, now, I should send him a challenge, presently. Come hither, you shall challenge him. I'll show you a trick or two you shall kill him with, at pleasure: the first stoccata, if you will, by this air.

Mat.—Indeed, you have absolute knowledge i' the mystery, I have heard, sir.

Bob.—Of whom? Of whom ha' you heard it, I beseech you?

Mat.—Troth, I have heard it spoken of by divers, that you have very rare and un-in-one-breath-utterable skill, sir.

Bob.—By heaven, no, not I; no skill i' the earth: some small rudiments i' the science, as to know my time, distance,

or so. I have professed it more for noblemen and gentlemen's use than mine own practice, I assure you. I'll give you a lesson. Look you, sir. Exalt not your point above this state, at any hand; so, sir, come on! Oh, twine your body more about, that you may fall to a more sweet, comely, gentleman-like guard. So, indifferent. Hollow your body more, sir, thus. Now, stand fast o' your left leg; note your distance; keep your due proportion of time—Oh, you disorder your point most irregularly! Come, put on your cloak, and we'll go to some private place, where you are acquainted—some tavern, or so—and have a bit. What money ha' you about you, Mr. Matthew?

Mat.—Faith! I ha' not past a two shillings, or so.

Bob.—'Tis somewhat with the least; but come, we will have a bunch of radishes and salt, to taste our wine; and a pipe of tobacco, to close the orifice of the stomach; and then we'll call upon young Wellbred. Perhaps we shall meet Corydon, his brother, there, and put him to the question. Come along, Mr. Matthew. (Exeunt.)

ACT II. SCENE I.

A workhouse belonging to Kitely. Enter Kitely, Cash and Downright.

Kitely.—Thomas, come hither.

There lies a note within, upon my desk;
Here, take my key—it is no matter, neither.
Where is the boy?

Cash.—Within, sir, i' the workhouse.

Kite.—Let him tell over straight that Spanish gold,
And weigh it, with the pieces of eight. Do you
See the delivery of those silver stuffs
To Master Lucar. Tell him, if he will,
He shall ha' the gograms at the rate I told him,
And I will meet him, on the Exchange, anon.

Cash.—Good, sir. (Exit.)

Kite.—Do you see that fellow, Brother Downright?

Downright.—Ay, what of him?

Kite.— He is a jewel, brother.

I took him of a child, up at my door,
And christen'd him; gave my own name, Thomas;
Since bred him at the hospital, where, proving
A toward imp, I call'd him home, and taught him
So much, as I have made him my cashier,
And find him, in his place, so full of faith,
That I durst trust my life into his hands.

Down.—So would not I, in any bastard's, brother,
As it is like he is, although I knew
Myself his father. But you said you'd somewhat
To tell me, gentle brother. What is't? What is't?

Kite.—Faith, I am very loth to utter it,
As fearing it may hurt your patience:
But that I know your judgment is of strength,
Against the nearness of affection—

Down.—What need this circumstance? Pray you, be direct.
Come to the matter, the matter.

Kite.—Then, without further ceremony, thus
My brother Wellbred, sir, I know not how,
Of late has much declined in what he was,
And greatly alter'd in his disposition.
When he came first to lodge here in my house;
Ne'er trust me, if I were not proud of him:
But now his course is so irregular,
So loose, affected, and deprived of grace;
He makes my house, here, common as a mart,
And here, as in a tavern or a stew,
He and his wild associates spend their hours,
In repetition of lascivious jests—
Swear, leap, drink, dance, and revel night by night
Control my servants; and, indeed, what not?

Down.—Faith, I know not what I should say to him i' the whole world! He values me at a cracked three-farthings, for aught I see. It will never out o' the flesh that's bred i' the bone! I have told him enough, one would think, if that would serve. Well, he knows what to trust to, 'fore George. Let him spend, and spend, and domineer, till his heart ache; an' he think to be relieved by me, when he is got into one o' your city

pounds, the counters, he has the wrong sow by the ear, i'faith, and claps his dish at a wrong man's door. I'll lay my hand on my halfpenny, ere I part with 't to fetch him out, I'll assure him.

Kite.—Nay, good brother, let it not trouble you, thus.

Down.—'Sdeath, he made me—I could eat my very spur leathers for anger! But, why are you so tame? Why do you not speak to him, and tell him how he disquiets your house?

Kite.—Oh, there are divers reasons to dissuade, brother;

But, would yourself vouchsafe to travail in it,
Though but with plain and easy circumstance,
It would both come much better to his sense,
And favor less of stomach, or of passion.
You are his elder brother, and that title
Both gives and warrants you authority:
Whereas, if I should intimate the least,
It would but add contempt to his neglect;
He would be ready, from his heat of humor,
To blow the ears of his familiars
With the false breath of telling what disgrace
And low disparagements I had put on him:
Whilst they, sir, to relieve him in the fable,
Make their loose comments upon ev'ry word,
Gesture, or look, I use; mock me all o'er;
Beget some slander, that shall dwell with me.
And what would that be, think you? Marry, this;
They would give out because my wife is fair,
Myself but newly married, and my sister
Here sojourning a virgin in my house,
That I were jealous! Nay, as sure as death,
That they would say. And how that I had quarrell'd
My brother purposely, thereby to find
An apt pretext to banish them my house.

Down.—Mass, perhaps so; they're like enough to do it.

Kite.—Brother, they would, believe it; so should I

But try experiments upon myself:
Lend scorn and envy opportunity
To stab my reputation and good name.

Enter Matthew and Bobadil.

Matthew.—I will speak to him——

Bobadil.—Speak to him! Away! by the foot of Pharoah, you shall not; you shall not do him that grace.

Kite.—What is the matter, sirs?

Bob.—The time of day to you, gentleman o' the house. Is Mr. Wellbred stirring?

Down.—How, then?—what should he do?

Bob.—Gentleman of the house, it is you:—is he within, sir?

Kite.—He came not to his lodging to-night, sir, I assure you.

Down.—Why, do you hear, you!

Bob.—The gentleman citizen hath satisfied me; I'll talk to no scavenger. (Exeunt Bobadil and Matthew.)

Down.—How, scavenger!—Stay, sir, stay!

Kite.—Nay, brother Downright——

Down.—Heart! stand you away, an' you love me.

Kite.—You shall not follow him now, I pray you, brother;—good faith, you shall not: I will overrule you.

Down.—Ha! scavenger! Well, go to, I say little; but, by this good day, (God forgive me I should swear!) if I put it up so, say I am the rankest coward ever lived. An' I swallow this, I'll ne'er draw my sword in the sight of Fleet street again, while I live; I'll sit in a barn with Madge Howlet, and catch mice first. Scavenger!

Kite.—O, do not fret yourself thus; never think on't.

Down.—These are my brother's consorts, these! these are his comrades, his walking mates! Let me not live, an' I could find in my heart to swinge the whole gang of them, one after another, and begin with him first. I am grieved it should be said he is my brother, and take these courses. Well, as he brews so he shall drink, 'fore George. Yet he shall hear on't, and that rightly, too, an' I live, i'faith.

Kite.—But, brother, let your reprehensions then

Run in an easy current, not o'er high:

But rather use the soft persuading way,

More winning than enforcing the consent.

Down.—Ay, ay, let me alone for that, I warrant you.

(Bell rings.)

Kite.—How, now! O, the bell rings to breakfast.

Brother, I pray you, go in, and bear my wife

Company till I come; I'll but give order

For some dispatch of business to my servant.

Down.—I will—Scavenger! scavenger! (Exit Downright.)

Kite.—Well, though my troubled spirit's somewhat eased,

It's not reposed in that security

As I could wish; but I must be content,

Howe'er I set a face on't to the world!

Would I had lost this finger, at a venture,

So Wellbred had ne'er lodged within my house!

Why 't cannot be, where there is such resort

Of wanton gallants, and young revellers,

That any woman should be honest long.

Well, to be plain, if I but thought the time

Had answer'd their affections, all the world

Should not persuade me but I were a cuckold!

Marry, I hope they have not got that start;

For opportunity hath balk'd them yet,

And shall do still, while I have eyes end ears

To attend the impositions of my heart.

Enter Dame Kitely.

Dame.—Sister Bridget, pray you fetch down the rosewater
above in the closet. Sweetheart, will you come in to breakfast?

Kite.—An' she overheard me, now!

Dame.—I pray thee, good love, we stay for you.

Kite.—By heaven! I would not for a thousand angels.

Dame.—What ails you, sweetheart, are you not well,
Speak, good Muss.

Kite.—Troth, my head aches extremely, on a sudden.

Dame.—Oh, the Lord!

Kite.—How now! What!

Dame.—Alas, how it burns! Love, keep you warm: good
truth it is this new disease, there's a number are troubled
withal! For love's sake, sweetheart, come in out of the air.

Kite.—How simple, and how subtle are her answers! A new disease, and many troubled with it! Why, true! she heard me, all the world to nothing.

Dame.—I pray thee, good sweetheart, come in; the air will do you harm, in troth.

Kite.—I'll come to you presently; 'twill away, I hope.

Dame.—Pray heaven it do.

(Exit Dame.)

Kite.—A new disease! I know not, new or old,

But it may well be call'd poor mortals' plague:

For, like a pestilence, it doth infect

The houses of the brain,

Till not a thought or motion in the mind

Be free from the black poison of suspect.

Well, I will once more strive,

In spite of this black cloud, myself to be,

And shake the fever off, that thus shakes me. (Exit.)

SCENE II.

Moorfields. Enter Brainworm, disguised like a soldier.

Brainworm.—Ha! I cannot choose but laugh, to see myself translated thus. Now must I create an intolerable sort of lies, or my present profession loses the grace; so much for my borrowed shape. Well, the truth is, my old master intends to follow my young, dry foot, over Moorfields to London this morning. Now I, knowing of this hunting match, or rather conspiracy, and to insinuate with my young masfer, have got me afore, in this disguise, determining here to lie in ambuscade, and intercept him in the midway. If I can but get his cloak, his purse, his hat, nay, anything to cut him off, that is, to stay his journey—*Veni, vidi, vici*, I may say with Captain Cæsar; I am made forever, i'faith. Well, now must I practice to get the true garb of one of those lance-knights, my arm here, and my—young master, and his cousin, Mr. Stephen, as I am a true counterfeit man of war, and no soldier. (Retires.)

Enter Master Stephen and Young Knowell.

Young Knowell.—So, sir, and how then, coz?

Stephen.—'Sfoot, I have lost my purse, I think.

Y. Kno.—How! lost your purse? Where? When had you it?

Step.—I cannot tell: stay.

Y. Kno.—What! ha' you it?

Step.—No, I think I was bewitched, I—

Y. Kno.—Nay, do not weep the loss: hang it, let it go.

Step.—Oh, it's here. No, an' it had been lost, I had not cared, but for a jet ring Mistress Mary sent me.

Y. Kno.—A jet ring! Oh, the posy, the posy!

Step.—Fine, i' the faith!—Though fancy sleep, my love is deep.—Meaning, that though I did not fancy her, yet she loved me dearly.

Y. Kno.—Most excellent!

Step.—And then I sent her another, and my posy was: The deeper the sweeter, I'll be judged by St. Peter.

Y. Kno.—How by St. Peter? I do not conceive that.

Step.—Marry, St. Peter to make up the metre.

Y. Kno.—Well, there the saint was your good patron: he helped you at your need: thank him, thank him.

Brain.—I cannot take leave of 'em so. Gentlemen, please you change a few crowns for a very excellent good blade, here? I am a poor gentleman, a soldier, that, in the better state of my fortune, scorned so mean a refuge; but now it is the humor of necessity to have it so. You seem to be gentlemen well affected to martial men, else I should rather die with silence than live with shame: however, vouchsafe to remember, it is my want speaks, not myself. This condition agrees not with my spirit.

Y. Kno.—Where hast thou served?

Brain.—May it please you, sir, in all the late wars of Bohemia, Hungaria, Dalmatia, Poland; where not, sir? I have been a poor servitor by sea and land, any time this fourteen years, and followed the fortunes of the best commanders in Christendom. I was twice shot at the taking of Aleppo; once at the relief of Vienna. I have been at Marseilles, Naples and the Adriatic gulf; a gentleman slave in the galleys thrice.

where I was most dangerously shot in the head, through both thighs, and yet, being thus maimed, I am void of maintenance; nothing left me but my scars, the noted marks of my resolution.

Step.—How will you sell this rapier, friend?

Brain.—Generous sir, I refer it to your own judgment; you are a gentleman, give me what you please.

Step.—True, I am a gentleman, I know that, friend: I pray you say, what would you ask?

Brain.—I assure you the blade may become the side or thigh of the best prince in Europe.

Y. Kno.—Ay, with a velvet scabbard.

Step.—Nay, an't be mine, it shall have a velvet scabbard, coz, that's flat: I'd not wear it as it is, an' you would give me an angel.

Brain.—At your worship's pleasure, sir; nay, 'tis a most pure Toledo.

Step.—I had rather it were a Spaniard; but tell me, what shall I give you for it? An' it had a silver hilt—

Y. Kno.—Come, come, you shall not buy it; hold, there's a shilling: fellow, take thy rapier.

Step.—Why, but I will buy it now, because you say so, and there's another shilling, fellow; I scorn to be outbidden. What! shall I walk with a cudgel, like a higgibottom, and may have a rapier for money?

Y. Kno.—You may buy one in the city.

Step.—Tut, I'll buy this i' the field, so I will; I have a mind to 't, because it is a field rapier. Tell me your lowest price.

Y. Kno.—You shall not buy it, I say.

Step.—By this money, but I will, though I give more than 'tis worth.

Y. Kno.—Come away; you are a fool. (Exit.)

Step.—Friend, I am a fool, that's granted: but I'll have it, for that word's sake. Follow me for your money. He says I am a fool!

Brain.—Yes, sir; the gentleman seems to know you.

(Exeunt.)

Enter Knowell.

Knowell.—I cannot lose the thought yet of this letter
Sent to my son; nor leave to admire the change
Of manners, and the breeding of our youth
Within the kingdom, since myself was one.
When I was young, he lived not in the stews
Durst have conceived a scorn, and utter'd it,
On a gray head;
And a man had then
A certain reverence paid unto his years,
That had none due unto his life.
But now we are fallen; youth from their fear,
And age from that which bred it, good example.

Enter Brainworm.

Brainworm.—My master! Nay, faith have at you: I am
fleshed now, I have sped so well; though I must attack you in
a different way. Worshipful sir, I beseech you, respect the
state of a poor soldier! I am ashamed of this base course of
life (God's my comfort), but extremity provokes me to't: what
remedy?

Knowell.—I have not for you now.

Brain.—By the faith I bear unto truth, gentleman, it is no
ordinary custom in me, but only to preserve manhood. I pro-
test to you, a man I have been, a man I may be, by your sweet
bounty.

Kno.—Pr'ythee, good friend, be satisfied.

Brain.—Good sir, by that hand, you may do the part of a
kind gentleman, in lending a poor soldier the price of two
cans of beer, a matter of small value: the King of Heaven
shall pay you, and I shall rest thankful: sweet worship—

Kno.—Nay, an' you be so importunate—

Brain.—Oh, tender sir, need will have his course: I was
not made to this vile use! Well, the edge of the enemy could
not have bated me so much. (He weeps.) It's hard, when a
man has served his prince's cause, and be thus— Honorable
sir, let me derive a small piece of silver from you, it shall not
be given in the course of time. By this good ground, I was

fain to pawn my rapier last night for a poor supper; I had suck'd the hilts long before, I am a pagan else: sweet honor.

Kno.—Believe me, I am taken with some wonder,
To think a fellow of that outward presence,
Should, in the frame and fashion of his mind,
Be so degenerate and sordid base!
Art thou not a man, and sham'st thou not to beg?
To practice such a servile kind of life?
Why, were thy education ne'er so mean,
Having thy limbs, a thousand fairer courses
Offer themselves to thy election.
Either the wars might still supply thy wants,
Or service of some virtuous gentleman.

Brain.—Faith, sir, I would gladly find some other course,
if so——

Kno.—Ay, you'd gladly find it, but you will not seek it.

Brain.—Alas! sir, where should a man seek? In the wars
there's no ascent by desert in these days, but—and for service,
would it were as soon purchased as wished for (the air's my
comfort)! I know what I would say——

Kno.—What's thy name?

Brain.—Please you, Fitzsword, sir.

Kno.—Fitzsword.

Say that a man should entertain thee now,
Would'st thou be honest, humble, just and true?

Brain.—Sir, by the place and honor of a soldier——

Kno.—Nay, nay, I like not those affected oaths!

Speak plainly, man; what think'st thou of my words?

Brain.—Nothing, sir; but wish my fortunes were as happy
as my service should be honest.

Kno.—Well, follow me; I'll prove thee, if thy deeds will
carry proportion to thy words. (Exit.)

Brain.—Yes, sir, straight: I'll but garter my hose. Oh,
that my belly were hooped now, for I am ready to burst with
laughing! Never was bottle or bagpipe fuller. 'Slid, was there
even seen a fox in years to betray himself thus? Now I shall
be possessed of all his counsels, and by that conduct my young
master! Well, he's resolved to prove my honesty; faith, and I

am resolved to prove his patience. Oh, I shall abuse him intolerably! This small piece of service will bring him clean out of love with the soldier forever. He will never come within the sight of a red coat or a musket again. Well, I'll follow him. Oh, how long to be employed!

With change of voice, these scars, and many an oath,
I'll follow son and sire, and serve 'em both. (Exit.)

ACT III. SCENE I.

Stocks Market.

Enter Wellbred, Matthew and Bobadil.

Matthew.—Yes, faith, sir! We were at your lodgings to seek you, too.

Wellbred.—Oh, I came not there to-night.

Bobadil.—Your brother delivered us as much.

Well.—Who? My brother Downright?

Bob.—He!—Mr. Wellbred, I know not in what kind you hold me; but let me say to you this: as sure as honor, I esteem it so much out of the sunshine of reputation, to throw the least beam of regard upon such a——

Well.—Sir, I must hear no ill words of my brother.

Bob.—I protest to you, as I have a thing to be saved about me, I never saw any gentleman-like part——

Well.—Good captain (faces about) to some other discourse.

Bob.—With your leave, sir, an' there were no more men living upon the face of the earth, I should not fancy him, by St. George.

Mat.—Troth, nor I; he is of a rustical cut, I know not how; he doth not carry himself like a gentleman of fashion——

Well.—Oh, Mr. Matthew, that's a grace peculiar but to a few——

Enter Young Knowell and Stephen.

Ned Knowell! By my soul, welcome! How dost thou, sweet spirit, my genius? I shall love Apollo and the mad Thespian girls the better whilst I live for this, my dear fury. Now

I see there's some love in thee!—Sirrah, these be the two I writ to you of. Nay, what a drowsy humor is this now? Why dost thou not speak?

Young Knowell.—O you are a fine gallant; you sent me a rare letter.

Wellbred.—Why, was't not rare?

Y. Kno.—Yes, I'll be sworn, I was never guilty of reading the like. But I marvel what camel it was that had the carriage of it; for doubtless he was no ordinary beast that brought it.

Well.—Why?

Y. Kno.—Why, sayest thou? Why, dost thou think that any reasonable creature, especially in the morning, the sober time of the day, too, could have mistaken my father for me?

Well.—'Slid, you jest, I hope.

Y. Kno.—Indeed, the best use we can turn it to is to make a jest on't now; but I'll assure you, my father had a full view o' your flourishing style, before I saw it.

Well.—What a dull slave was this! But, sirrah, what said he to it, i' faith?

Y. Kno.—Nay, I know not what he said; but I have a shrewd guess what he thought.

Well.—What, what?

Y. Kno.—Marry, that thou art some strange dissolute young fellow, and I not a grain or two better, for keeping thee company.

Well.—Tut, that thought is like the moon in her last quarter, 'twill change shortly. But, sirrah, I pray thee be acquainted with my two hang-bys here;—thou wilt take exceeding pleasure in 'em, if thou hearest 'em once go: my wind instruments. I'll wind 'em up—— But what strange piece of silence is this? The sign of the dumb man!

Y. Kno.—Oh, sir, a kinsman of mine; one that may make your music the fuller, an' please: he has his humor, sir.

Well.—Oh, what is't, what is't?

Y. Kno.—Nay, I'll neither do your judgment, nor his folly, that wrong, as to prepare your apprehensions. I'll leave him to the mercy o' your search, if you can take him so.

Well.—Well, Captain Bobadil, Mr. Matthew, I pray you know this gentleman here; he is a friend of mine, and one that will deserve your affection. I know not your name, sir, but shall be glad of any occasion to render me more familiar to you.

Stephen.—My name is Mr. Stephen, sir: I am this gentleman's own cousin, sir; his father is mine uncle, sir; I am somewhat melancholy, but you shall command me, sir, in whatsoever is incident to a gentleman.

Bob.—I must tell you this, I am no general man: but, for Mr. Wellbred's sake (you may embrace it at what height of favor you please) I do communicate with you; and conceive you to be a gentleman of some parts. I love few words.

Y. Kno.—And I fewer, sir. I have scarce enow to thank you.

Mat.—But are you indeed, sir, so given to it?

(To Mr. Stephen.)

Step.—Ay, truly, sir, I am mightily given to melancholy.

Mat.—Oh, it's your only fine humor, sir; your true melancholy breeds your perfect fine wit, sir: I am melancholy myself divers times, sir, and then do I no more but take a pen and paper presently, and overflow you half a score or a dozen of sonnets, at a sitting.

Step.—Cousin, am I melancholy enough?

Y. Kno.—Oh, ay, excellent!

Well.—Captain Bobadil, why muse you so!

Y. Kno.—He is melancholy too.

Bob.—Faith, sir, I was thinking of a most honorable piece of service was perform'd, to-morrow, being St. Mark's day, shall be some ten years now.

Y. Kno.—In what place, captain?

Bob.—Why, at the beleag'ring of Strigonium, where, in less than two hours, seven hundred resolute gentlemen as any were in Europe lost their lives upon the breach. I'll tell you, gentlemen, it was the first but the best leagure that ever I beheld with these eyes, except the taking of—what do you call it, last year, by the Genoese; but that (of all others) was the most fatal and dangerous exploit that ever I was ranged in,

since I first bore arms before the face of the enemy, as I am a gentleman and a soldier.

Step.—So, I had as lief as an angel I could swear as well as that gentleman.

Y. Kno.—Then you were a servitor at both, it seems; at Strigonium, and what do you call't?

Bob.—Oh, lord, sir! by St. George, I was the first man that enter'd the breach; had I not effected it with resolution I had been slain, if I had had a million of lives.

Y. Kno.—'Twas pity you had not ten; a cat's, and your own i' faith. But, was it possible?

Bob.—I assure you, upon my reputation, 'tis true, and yourself shall confess.

Y. Kno.—You must bring me to the rack first.

Bob.—Observe me judiciously, sweet sir: they had planted me three demi-culverins, just in the mouth of the breach; now, sir, as we were to give on, their master-gunner (a man of no mean skill and mark, you must think) confronts me with his linstock, ready to give fire: I, spying his intendment, discharged my petrionel in his bosom, and with these single arms, my poor rapier, ran violently upon the Moors, that guarded the ordnance, and put them all pell-mell to the sword.

Well.—To the sword! to the rapier, captain!

Y. Kno.—Oh, it was a good figure observed, sir! But did you all this, captain, without hurting your blade?

Bob.—Without any impeach o' the earth; you shall perceive, sir. It is the most fortunate weapon that ever rid on a poor gentleman's thigh. Shall I tell you, sir? You talk of Morglay, Excalibur, Durindina, or so! Tut, I lend no credit to that is fabled of 'em; I know the virtue of mine own, and therefore I dare the boldlier maintain it.

Step.—I marvel whether it be a Toledo, or no.

Bob.—A most perfect Toledo, I assure you, sir.

Step.—I have a countryman of his here.

Mat.—Pray you, let's see, sir. Yes, faith, it is!

Bob.—This a Toledo! pish.

Step.—Why do you pish, captain?

Bob.—A Fleming, by Heaven! I'll buy them for a gilder a piece, an' I will have a thousand of them.

Y. Kno.—How say you, cousin? I told you thus much.

Well.—Where bought you it, Mr. Stephen?

Step.—Of a scurvy rogue soldier; he swore it was a Toledo.

Bob.—A poor provant rapier—no better.

Mat.—Mass, I think it be, indeed, now I look on't better.

Bob.—Come along, Master Matthew.

(*Exeunt Bobadil and Matthew.*)

Y. Kno.—Nay, the longer you look on't, the worse. Put it up, put it up.

Step.—Well, I will put it up, but by—(I ha' forgot the captain's oath, I thought to have sworn by it) an' e'er I meet him—

Well.—O, 'tis past help now, sir; you must ha' patience.

Step.—Whorson coney-catching rascal! I could eat the very hilts for anger.

Y. Kno.—A sign of good digestion; you have an ostrich stomach, cousin.

Step.—A stomach! I would I had him here; you should see an' I had a stomach.

Well.—It's better as 'tis. Come, gentlemen, shall we go?

Enter Brainworm.

Y. Kno.—A miracle! cousin! look here! look here!

Step.—O, God'slid; by my leave, do you know me, sir?

Brain.—Ay, sir, I know you by sight.

Step.—You sold me a rapier, did you not?

Brain.—Yes, marry, did I, sir.

Step.—You said it was a Toledo, ha?

Brain.—True, I did so.

Step.—But it is none!

Brain.—No, sir, I confess it is none.

Step.—Do you confess it? Gentlemen, bear witness, he has confess'd it. By God's will, an' you had not confess'd it—

Y. Kno.—Oh, cousin, forbear, forbear.

Step.—Nay, I have done, cousin.

Well.—Why, you have done like a gentleman: he has confess'd it: what would you more?

Step.—Yet, by his leave, he is a rascal; under his favor, do you see?

Y. Kno.—Ay, by his leave, he is, and under favor. Pretty piece of civility? Sirrah, how dost thou like him?

Well.—Oh, it's a most precious fool—make much on him. I can compare him to nothing more happily than a drum; for every one may play upon him.

Y. Kno.—No, no; a child's whistle were far fitter.

Brain.—Sir, shall I entreat a word with you?

Y. Kno.—With me, sir! You have not another Toledo to sell, ha' you?

Brain.—You are conceited, sir; your name is Mr. Knowell, as I take it?

Y. Kno.—You are i' the right. You mean not to proceed in the catechism, do you?

Brain.—No, sir; I am none of that coat.

Y. Kno.—Of as bare coat, though! Well, say, sir?

Brain.—Faith, sir, I am but a servant to the drum extraordinary, and, indeed, this smoky varnish being washed off, and three or four patches removed, I appear your worship's in reversion, after the decease of your good father—Brainworm.

Y. Kno.—Brainworm! 'Slight, what breath of a conjurer hath blew thee hither in this shape?

Brain.—The breath o' your letter, sir, this morning: the same that blew you to the windmill, and your father after you.

Y. Kno.—My father!

Brain.—Nay, never start; 'tis true: he has followed you over the fields, by foot, as you would do a hare i' the snow.

Y. Kno.—Sirrah, Wellbred, what shall we do, sirrah? My father is come over after me.

Well.—Thy father! Where is he?

Brain.—At Justice Clement's house, here, in Coleman street, where he but stays my return; and then—

Well.—Who is this? Brainworm?

Brain.—The same, sir.

Well.—Why, how, i' the name of wit, comest thou transmuted thus?

Brain.—Faith, a device! A device! Nay, for the love of reason, gentlemen, and avoiding the danger, stand not here; withdraw, and I'll tell you all.

Y. Kno.—Come, cousin.

(*Exeunt.*)

SCENE II.

The Warehouse. Enter Kitely and Cash.

Kitely.—What says he, Thomas? Did you speak with him?

Cash.—He will expect you, sir within this half hour.

Kite.—Has he the money ready, can you tell?

Cash.—Yes, sir; the money was brought in last night.

Kite.—Oh, that's well; fetch me my cloak. (*Exit Cash.*)

Stay, let me see, an hour to go and come;

Ay, that will be the least; and then 'twill be

An hour before I can dispatch with him,

Or very near: well, I will say two hours.

Two hours! Ha! Things never dreamt of yet

May be contrived, ay, and effected, too,

In two hours absence. Well, I will not go.

Two hours; no fleeting opportunity,

I will not give your subtlety that scope.

Who will not judge him worthy to be robb'd,

That sets his doors wide open to a thief,

And shows the felon where his treasure lies?

Again, what earthly spirit but will attempt

To taste the fruit of beauty's golden tree,

When leaden sleep seals up the dragon's eyes?

I will not go. Business, go by for once.

No, beauty, no; you are too, too precious

To be left so without a guard.

He, that lends
His wife, if she be fair, or time or place,
Compels her to be false. I will not go.

Enter Cash.

Carry in my cloak again. Yet, stay. Yet do, too.
I will defer going on all occasions.

Cash.—Sir, Snare, your scrivener, will be there with the bonds.

Kite.—That's true: fool on me! I had clean forgot it!
I must go. What's o'clock?

Cash.—Exchange time, sir.

Kite.—'Heart! then will Wellbred presently be here, too,
With one or other of his loose consorts.
I am a knave, if I know what to say,
What course to take, or which way to resolve.
My brain, methinks, is like an hour-glass,
Wherein my imagination runs, like sands,
Filling up time; but then are turn'd and turn'd;
So that I know not what to stay upon,
And less to put in act. It shall be so—
Nay, I dare build upon his secrecy;
He knows not to deceive me. Thomas!

Cash.—Sir.

Kite.—Yet now, I have bethought me, too, I will not—
Thomas, is Cob within?

Cash.—I think he be, sir.

Kite.—But he'll prate, too, there's no speech of him.
No, there were no man o' the earth to Thomas,
If I durst trust him; there is all the doubt.
But should he have a chink in him, I were gone,
Lost in my fame forever; talk for th' Exchange.
The manner he hath stood with, till this present,
Doth promise no such change! What shall I fear, then?
Well, come what will, I'll tempt my fortune once.
Thomas—you may deceive me, but I hope—
Your love to me is more—

Cash.—Sir, if a servant's

Duty, with faith, may be call'd love, you are
More than in hope, you are possess'd of it.

Kite.—I thank you heartily, Thomas; gi' me your hand.
With all my heart, good Thomas. I have, Thomas,
A secret to impart to you—but,
When once you have it, I must seal your lips up.
So far I tell you, Thomas.

Cash.—Sir, for that—

Kite.—Nay, hear me out. Think, I esteem you, Thomas,
When I let you in thus to my private.
It is a thing sits nearer to my crest
Than thou'rt aware of, Thomas. If thou shouldst
Reveal it, but—

Cash.—How! I reveal it!

Kite.—Nay,

I do not think thou wouldst; but if thou shouldst,
'Twere a great weakness.

Cash.—A great treachery.

Give it no other name.

Kite.—Thou wilt not do't, then?

Cash.—Sir, if I do, mankind disclaim me ever.

Kite.—He will not swear; he has some reservation,
Some conceal'd purpose, and close meaning, sure;
Else, being urged so much, how should he choose,
But lend an oath to all this protestation?
He's no fanatic, I have heard him swear.
What should I think of it? Urge him again,
And by some other way? I will do so—
Well, Thomas, thou hast sworn not to disclose;
Yes, you did swear.

Cash.—Not yet, sir, but I will.

Please you——

Kite.—No, Thomas, I dare take thy word;

But if thou wilt swear, do, as thou think'st good;
I am resolved without it; at thy pleasure.

Cash.—By my soul's safety, then, sir, I protest

My tongue shall ne'er take knowledge of a word
Deliver'd me in nature of your trust.

Kite.—It's too much; these ceremonies need not.
I know thy faith to be as firm as rock.
Thomas, come hither—nearer; we cannot be
Too private in this business. So it is.
Now he has sworn, I dare the safelier venture:
I have of late, by divers observations—
But whether his oath can bind him, there it is;
Being not taken lawfully? ha—say you?
I will bethink me ere I do proceed.
Thomas, it will be now too long to stay.
I'll spy some fitter time soon, or to-morrow.

Cash.—Sir, at your pleasure.

Kite.—I will think—give me my cloak—and, Thomas,
I pray you search the books 'gainst my return,
For the receipts 'twixt me and Traps.

Cash.—I will, sir.

Kite.—And, hear you, if your mistress' brother, Wellbred,
Chance to bring hither any gentlemen,
Ere I come back, let one straight bring me word.

Cash.—Very well, sir.

Kite.—To the Exchange; do you hear?
Or here in Coleman street, to Justice Clement's.
Forget it not, nor be out of the way.

Cash.—I will not, sir.

Kite.—I pray you, have a care on't.
Or whether he come or no, if any other
Stranger, or else, fail not to send me word.

Cash.—I shall not, sir.

Kite.—Be't your special business
Now to remember it.

Cash.—Sir, I warrant you.

Kite.—But, Thomas, this is not the secret, Thomas,
I told you of.

Cash.—No, sir, I do suppose it.

Kite.—Believe me, it is not.

Cash.—Sir, I do believe you.

Kite.—By Heaven, it is not! That's enough. But, Thomas,
 I would not you should utter it, do you see,
 To any creature living; yet I care not.
 Well, I must hence. Thomas, conceive thus much;
 It was a trial of you; when I meant
 So deep a secret to you, I meant not this.
 But that I have to tell you. This is nothing, this.
 But, Thomas, keep this from my wife, I charge you.
 Lock'd up in silence, midnight, buried here,
 No greater hell than to be slave to fear. (Exit.)

Cash.—Lock'd up in silence, midnight, buried here.
 Whence should this flood of passion, trow, take head?—
 But soft,
 Here is company; now must I—— (Exit.)

Enter Wellbred, Young Knowell, Brainworm, Bobadil,
 Stephen and Matthew.

Wellbred.—Beshrew me, but it was an absolute good jest,
 and exceedingly well carried.

Young Knowell.—Ay, and our ignorance maintained it as
 well, did it not?

Well.—Yes, faith! But was't possible thou shouldst not
 know him? I forgive Mr. Stephen, for he is stupidity itself.
 Why, Brainworm, who would have thought thou hadst been
 such an artificer?

Y. Kno.—An artificer! An architect! Except a man has
 studied begging all his lifetime, and been a weaver of language
 from his infancy, for the clothing of it, I never saw his rival.

Well.—Where got'st thou this coat, I marvel?

Brainworm.—Of a Houndsditch man, sir, one of the devil's
 near kinsmen, a broker.

Enter Cash.

Cash.—Francis! Martin! Ne'er a one to be found now.
 What a spite's this!

Well.—How now, Thomas, is my brotherly Kately within?

Cash.—No, sir: my master went forth e'en now; but Master Downright is within. Cob! What, Cob! is he gone too?

Well.—Whither went your master, Thomas? canst thou tell?

Cash.—I know not; to Justice Clement's, I think, sir.—
Cob! (Exit *Cash.*)

Young Knowell.—Justice Clement's! What's he?

Well.—Why, dost thou not know him? He is a city magistrate, a justice here; an excellent good lawyer, and a great scholar; but the only mad and merry old fellow in Europe. I showed you him the other day.

Y. Kuo.—Oh, is that he? I remember him now. I have heard many of his jests i' the university. They say he will commit a man for taking the wall of his horse.

Well.—Ay, or wearing his cloak on one shoulder, or serving of God. Any thing, indeed, if it come in the way of his humor.

Enter *Cash*.

Cash.—Gasper! Martin! Cob! 'Heart! where should they be, trow?

Bobadil.—Master Kitely's man, pr'ythee, vouchsafe us the lighting of this match.

Cash.—Fire on your match! no time but now to vouchsafe? Francis! Cob! (Exit.)

Bob.—Body of me! Here's the remainder of seven pound since yesterday was seven night. 'Tis your right Trinidado! Did you never take any, Master Stephen?

Stephen.—No, truly, sir; but I'll learn to take it now, since you commend it so.

Bob.—Sir, believe me, upon my relation, for what I tell you the world shall not reprove. I have been in the Indies, where this herb grows, where neither myself, nor a dozen gentlemen more, of my knowledge, have received the taste of any other nutriment in the world, for the space of one-and-twenty weeks, but the fume of this simple only: therefore it cannot be but 'tis most divine, especially near Trinidado. Your Nicotian is good, too. I do hold it, and will affirm it, before any prince

in Europe, to be the most sovereign and precious weed that ever the earth tendered to the use of man.

Y. Kno.—This speech would have done decently in a tobacco trader's mouth.

Enter Cash and Cob.

Cash.—At Justice Clement's he is, in the middle of Coleman street.

Cob.—O, ho!

Bob.—Where's the match I gave thee, master Kitely's man?

Cash.—Here it is, sir.

Cob.—By God's me! I marvel what pleasure or felicity they have in taking this roguish tobacco! it's good for nothing but to choke a man, and fill him full of smoke and embers.

(Bobadil beats him with a cudgel; Matthew runs away; enter Brainworm.)

All.—Oh, good captain! hold, hold!

Bob.—You base scullion, you—

Cash.—Come, thou must need be talking, too; thou'rt well enough served.

Cob.—Well, it shall be a dear beating, an' I live! I will have justice for this.

Bob.—Do you prate? Do you murmur?

(Bobadil beats him off.)

Y. Kno.—Nay, good captain, will you regard the humor of a fool?

Bob.—A whorson filthy slave! a dungworm, an excrement! Body o' Cæsar, but that I scorn to let forth so mean a spirit, I'd have stabbed him to the earth.

Well.—Marry, the law forbid, sir.

Bob.—By Pharoah's foot, I would have done it. (Exit.)

Step.—Oh, he swears admirably! By Pharaoh's foot—Body of Cæsar—I shall never do it, sure; upon mine honor, and by St. George; no, I ha'n't the right grace.

Well.—But, soft, where's Mr. Matthew? gone?

Brainworm.—No, sir; they went in here.

Well.—O, let's follow them: Master Matthew is gone to salute his mistress in verse. We shall have the happiness to hear some of his poetry now. He never comes unfurnished. Brainworm!

Step.—Brainworm! Where? Is this Brainworm?

Y. Kno.—Ay, cousin, no words of it, upon your gentility.

Step.—Not I, body of me! by this air, St. George, and the foot of Pharoah!

Well.—Rare! your cousin's discourse is simply drawn out with oaths.

Y. Kno.—'Tis larded with them. A kind of French dressing, if you love it. Come, let's in. Come, cousin. (Exeunt.)

SCENE III.

A hall in Justice Clement's house. Enter Kately and Cob.

Kately.—Ha! How many are there, say'st thou?

Cob.—Marry, sir, your brother, Master Wellbred—

Kite.—Tut! beside him: what strangers are there, man?

Cob.—Strangers! Let me see—one, two—mass, I know not well, there are so many.

Kite.—How, so many?

Cob.—Ay, there's some five or six of them, at the most.

Kite.—A swarm, a swarm!

Spite of the devil, how they sting my head

With forked stings, thus wide and large! But, Cob,

How long hast thou been coming hither, Cob?

Cob.—A little while, sir.

Kite.—Didst thou come running?

Cob.—No, sir.

Kite.—Nay, then I am familiar with thy haste!

Bane to my fortunes. What meant I to marry?

I, that before was rank'd in such content,

My mind at rest too, in so soft a peace,

Being free master of my own free thoughts,

And now become a slave? What, never sigh!

Be of good cheer, man, for thou art a cuckold.
 'Tis done, 'tis done! Nay, when such flowing store,
 Plenty itself falls into my wife's lap,
 The cornucopia will be mine, I know. But, Cob,
 What entertainment had they? I am sure
 My sister and my wife would bid them welcome, ha!

Cob.—Like enough, sir; yet I heard not a word of it.

Kite.—No; their lips were seal'd with kisses, and the voice,
 Drown'd in a flood of joy at their arrival,
 Had lost her motion, state, and faculty.
 Cob, which of them was't, that first kiss'd my wife?
 My sister, I should say: my wife, alas!
 I fear not her. Ha! Who was it, say'st thou?

Cob.—By my troth, sir, will you have the truth of it?

Kite.—Ay, good Cob, I pray thee, heartily.

Cob.—Then I am a vagabond, and fitter for Bridewell than
 your worship's company, if I saw any body to be kissed,
 unless they would have kissed the post in the middle of
 the warehouse; for there I left them all, at their tobacco,
 with a pox.

Kite.—How, were they not gone in, then, ere thou cam'st?

Cob.—O no, sir!

Kite.—Spite o' the devil! What do I stay here then? Cob, Cob,
 follow me. (Exeunt.)

ACT IV. SCENE I.

A room in Kitley's house. Enter Downright and Dame Kitley.

Downright.—Well, sister, I tell you true; and you'll find it
 so in the end.

Dame Kitley.—Alas, brother, what would you have me to
 do? I cannot help it. You see my brother brings them in
 here: they are his friends.

Down.—His friends! his fiends! Lord, they do nothing but
 haunt him up and down, like a sort of unlucky spirits, and
 tempt him to all manner of villainy that can be thought of.
 Well, by this light, a little thing would make me play the devil
 with some of them! And 'twere not more for your husband's

sake, than any thing else, I'd make the house too hot for the best on 'em. They should say, and swear, hell were broken loose, ere they went hence. But, by God's will, 'tis nobody's fault but yours; for an' you had done as you might have done, they should have been parboiled, and baked too, every mother's son, ere they should ha' come in, e'er a one of 'em.

Dame Kite.—God's my life! did you ever hear the like? What a strange man is this! Could I keep out all them, think you! I should put myself against half-a-dozen men, should I? Good faith, you'd mad the patient'st body in the world, to hear you talk so without any sense or reason!

Enter Mrs. Bridget, Mr. Matthew, Wellbred, Stephen, Young Knowell, Bobadil and Cash.

Bridget.—Servant, in troth, you are too prodigal
Of your wit's treasure, thus to pour it forth
Upon so mean a subject as my worth.

Matthew.—You say well, mistress, and I mean as well.

Downright.—Hey day, here is stuff!

Wellbred.—O, now stand close. Pray heavens she can get him to read; he should do it of his own natural impudence.

Bridg.—Servant, what is this same, I pray you?

Mat.—Marry, an elegy! an elegy! an odd toy—I'll read it, if you please.

Bridg.—Pray you do, servant.

Down.—O, here's no foppery! Death, I can endure the stocks better.

Young Knowell.—What ails thy brother? Can he not hear the reading of a ballad?

Well.—O no, a rhyme to him is worse than cheese, or a bagpipe.—But, mark, you lose the protestation.

Bridg.—Come, servant, I pray read it.

Bobadil.—Master Matthew, you abuse the expectation of your dear mistress, and her fair sister. Fie, while you live, avoid this prolixity.

Mat.—I shall, sir——

(Reads.)

Rare creature, let me speak without offense,

'Would Heav'n my rude words had the influence
To rule thy thoughts, as thy fair looks do mine,
Then should'st thou be his prisoner, who is thine.

(Master Stephen answers with shaking his head.)

Y. Kno.—'Slight, he shakes his head like a bottle, to feel
an' there be any brain in it!

Well.—Sister, what ha' you here? Verses? Pray you let's
see. Who made these verses? they are excellent good.

Mat.—O, Master Wellbred, 'tis your disposition to say so,
sir; they were good i' the morning; I made them extempore
this morning.

Well.—How, extempore!

Mat.—I would I might be hang'd else; ask Captain Bobadil.
He saw me write them at the—the Star yonder.

Step.—Cousin, how do you like this gentleman's verses?

Y. Kno.—O, admirable! the best that ever I heard, coz.

Step.—Body o' Cæsar! they are admirable! The best I
ever heard, as I am a soldier.

Down.—I am vexed; I can hold ne'er a bone of me still!—
'Heart! I think they mean to build and breed here.

Well.—Sister Kitely, I marvel you get you not a servant
that can rhyme, and do tricks too.

Down.—O, monster! Impudence itself! Tricks!—Come,
you might practice your ruffian tricks somewhere else, and not
here. This is no tavern, nor drinking school, to vent your ex-
ploits in.

Well.—How now! whose cow has calved?

Down.—Marry, that has mine, sir. Nay, boy, never look
askance at me for the matter; I'll tell you of it; ay, sir, you
and your companions; mend yourselves, when I ha' done!

Well.—My companions!

Down.—Yes, sir, your companions, so I say; I am not
afraid of you nor them neither, your hang-boys here. You
must have your poets and your potlings, your soldados and
foolados, to follow you up and down the city.—Sirrah, you
ballad singer; and, slops, you fellow there, get out; get you

home; or, by this steel, I'll cut off your ears, and that presently.

Well.—'Slight, stay, and let's see what he dare do. Cut off his ears! cut a whetstone! You are an ass, do you see; touch any man here, and by this hand, I'll run my rapier to the hilts in you.

Down.—Yea, that would I fain see, boy.

(They all draw, and they of the house make out to part them.)

Dame Kite.—Oh, Jesu! Murder! Thomas! Gasper!

Bridg.—Help, help, Thomas.

Bob.—Sirrah! You Holofernes! by my hand, I will pink your flesh full of holes with my rapier, for this; I will by this, good heav'n. Nay, let him come, gentlemen, by the body of St. George, I'll not kill him.

(They offer to fight again, and are parted.)

Cash.—Hold, hold, good gentlemen.

Down.—You whorson, bragging coistril.

Enter Kitely.

Kitely.—Why, how now, what's the matter? What's the stir here?

Put up your weapons, and put off this rage.

My wife and sister, they're the cause of this.

What, Thomas! where is the knave?

Cash.—Here, sir.

Well.—Come, let's go; this is one of my brother's ancient humors, this. (Exit.)

Step.—I am glad nobody was hurt by his ancient humor. (Exit.)

Kite.—Why, how now, brother, who enforced this brawl?

Down.—A sort of lewd rake-hells, that care neither for God nor the devil. And they must come here to read ballads, and roguery, and trash! I'll mar the knot of 'em ere I sleep, perhaps; especially Bob there, he that's all manner of shapes; and songs and sonnets, his fellow. But I'll follow 'em.

(Exit.)

Bridg.—Brother, indeed you are too violent,
Too sudden in your humor.
There was one a civil gentleman,
And very worthily demean'd himself.

Kite.—Oh, that was some love of yours, sister.

Bridg.—A love of mine! I would it were no worse, brother!
You'd pay my portion sooner than you think for. (Exit.)

Dame Kitely.—Indeed, he seemed to be a gentleman of exceeding fair disposition, and of very excellent good parts.
What a coil and stir is here! (Exit.)

Kite.—Her love, by heav'n! my wife's minion!
Death, these phrases are intolerable!
Well, well, well, well, well, well!
It is too plain, too clear. Thomas, come hither.
What, are they gone?

Cash.—Ay, sir, they went in.
My mistress, and your sister——

Kite.—Are any of the gallants within?

Cash.—No, sir, they are all gone.

Kite.—Art thou sure of it?

Cash.—I can assure you, sir.

Kite.—What gentleman was it that they praised so, Thomas?

Cash.—One, they call him Master Knowell, a handsome young gentleman, sir.

Kite.—Ay, I thought so. My mind gave me as much,
I'll die, but they have hid him in the house,
Somewhere; I'll go and search. Go with me, Thomas.
Be true to me, and thou shalt find me a master.
(Exeunt.)

SCENE II.

Moorfields.

Enter Young Knowell, Wellbred and Brainworm.

Young Knowell.—Well, Brainworm, perform this business happily, and thou makest a purchase of my love forever.

Wellbred.—I' faith, now let thy spirits use their best faculties; but at my hand, remember the message to my brother: for there's no other means to start him out of his house.

Brainworm.—I warrant you, sir, fear nothing. I have a nimble soul, has waked all forces of my phant'ys by this time, and put them in true motion. What you have possessed me withal, I'll discharge it amply, sir. Make it no question.

(Exit.)

Well.—Forth, and prosper, Brainwōrm. Faith, Ned, how dost thou approve of my abilities in this device?

Y. Kno.—Troth, well, howsoever: but it will come excellent, if it take.

Well.—Take, man! Why, it cannot choose but take, if the circumstances miscarry not. But tell me, ingenuously, dost thou affect my sister Bridget, as thou pretend'st?

Y. Kno.—Friend, am I worth belief?

Well.—Come, do not protest. In faith, she is a maid of good ornament, and much modesty; and, except I conceived very worthily of her, thou should'st not have——

Y. Kno.—Nay, that I am afraid will be a question yet, whether I shall have her or no.

Well.—'Slid, thou shalt have her; by this light thou shalt.

Y. Kno.—I do believe thou wilt omit no offered occasion to make my desires complete.

Well.—Thou shalt see and know I will not. (Exeunt.)

Enter Knowell and Formal.

Formal.—Was your man a soldier, sir?

Knowell.—Ay, a knave. I took him begging o' the way, this morning as I came over Moorfields.

Enter Brainworm.

Oh, here he is! You have made fair speed, believe me!

Where i' the name of sloth could you be thus—

Brainworm.—Marry, peace be my comfort, where I thought I should have had little comfort of your worship's service.

Knowell.—How so?

Brain.—Oh, sir! Your coming to the city, your entertainment of me, and your sending me to watch—indeed, all the circumstances either of your charge, or my employment, are as open to your son as to yourself.

Kno.—How should that be! unless that villain, Brainworm, Have told him of the letter, and discover'd All that I strictly charged him to conceal! 'Tis so!

Brain.—I am partly o' that faith, 'tis so indeed.

Kno.—But how should he know you to be my man?

Brain.—Nay, sir, I cannot tell, unless it be by the black art.

Kno.—But where didst thou find them, Fitzword?

Brain.—You should rather ask, where they found me, sir; for I'll be sworn I was going along in the street, thinking nothing, when (of a sudden) a voice calls—Mr. Knowell's man; another cries—soldier: and thus, half a dozen of them, till they had called me within a house, where I no sooner came, but out flew all their rapiers at my bosom, with some three or fourscore oaths to accompany them, and all to tell me, I was a dead man, if I did not confess where you were, and how I was employed, and about what; which, when they could not get out of me (as I protest they must have dissected me, and made an anatomy of me first, and so I told them), they locked me up in a room i' the top of a high house, whence, by great miracle, having a light heart, I slid down by a bottom of pack-thread into the street, and so escaped. But, sir, thus much I can assure you; for I heard it while I was locked up; there were a great many rich merchants' and brave citizens' wives with them at a feast, and your son, Mr. Edward, withdrew with one of them, and has appointed to meet her anon, at one Cob's house, a water-bearer, that dwells by the wall. Now, there your worship shall be sure to take him, for there he preys, and fail he will not.

Kno.—Nor will I fail, to break this match I doubt not.

Go thou along with Justice Clement's man,

And stay there for me. At one Cob's house, say'st thou?

Brain.—Ay, sir, there you shall have him. (Exit Knowell.)
'Slight, when he has staid there three or four hours, travelling

with the expectation of wonders, and at length be delivered of air! Oh, the sport that I should then take to look on him, if I durst! But now I mean to appear no more before him in this shape. I have another trick to act yet. Sir, I make you stay somewhat long.

Form.—Not a whit, sir.

You have been lately in the wars, sir, it seems.

Brain.—Marry have I, sir, to my loss, and expense of all, almost——

Form.—Troth, sir, I would be glad to bestow a bottle o'you, if it please you to accept it——

Brain.—Oh, sir——

Form.—But to hear the manner of your services and your devices in the wars; they say they be very strange, and not like those a man reads in the Roman histories, or sees at Mile-End.

Brain.—Sir, at any time when it please you, I shall be ready to discourse with you all I know; and more too, somewhat.

Form.—No better time than now, sir. We'll go to the Windmill, there we shall have a cup of neat grist, as we call it. I pray you, sir, let me request you to the Windmill.

Brain.—I'll follow you, sir, and make grist o' you, if I have good luck. (Exeunt.)

Enter Matthew, Young Knowell, Bobadil and Stephen.

Matthew.—Sir, did your eyes ever taste the like clown of him, where we were to-day, Mr. Wellbred's half-brother? I think the whole earth cannot show his parallel, by this daylight.

Young Knowell.—We are now speaking of him. Captain Bobadil tells me, he is fallen foul o' you too.

Mat.—Oh, ay, sir; he threatened me with the bastinado.

Bobadil.—Ay, but I think I taught you prevention this morning for that. You shall kill him, beyond question, if you be so generously minded.

Mat.—Indeed, it is a most excellent trick!

Bob.—Oh, you do not give spirit enough to your motion; you are too tardy, too heavy! Oh, it must be done like lightning! Hey! (He practices at a post.)—Tut, 'tis nothing an't be not done in a—punto!

Y. Kno.—Captain, did you ever prove yourself upon any of our masters of defense here?

Bob.—I will tell you, sir. They have assaulted me some three, four, five, six of them together, as I have walked alone in divers skirts of the town, where I have driven them before me the whole length of a street, in the open view of all our gallants, pitying to hurt them, believe me. Yet all this lenity will not overcome their spleen; they will be doing with the pismire, raising a hill a man may spurn abroad with his foot, at pleasure. By myself I could have slain them all, but I delight not in murder. I am loth to bear any other than this bastinado for them: yet I hold it good policy not to go disarmed, for, though I be skillful, I may be oppressed with multitudes.

Y. Kno.—Ay, believe me, may you, sir; and, in my conceit, our whole nation should sustain the loss by it, if it were so.

Bob.—Alas, no! What's a peculiar man to a nation? Not seen.

Y. Kno.—Oh, but your skill, sir!

Bob.—Indeed, that might be some loss; but who respects it? I will tell you, sir, by the way of private, and under seal, I am a gentleman, and live here obscure, and to myself: but were I known to his majesty, and the lords, observe me, I would undertake, upon this poor head and life, for the public benefit of the state, not only to spare the entire lives of his subjects in general, but to save the one-half, nay, three parts of his yearly charge in holding war, and against what enemy soever. And how would I do it, think you?

Y. Kno.—Nay, I know not, nor can I conceive.

Bob.—Why, thus, sir. I would select nineteen more to myself; gentlemen they should be, of a good spirit, strong and able constitution; I would choose them by an instinct, a character that I have; and I would teach these nineteen the special rules, as your Punto, your Reverso, your Stoccata, your Imbrocata, your Passada, your Montonto; till they could all

play very near, or altogether, as well as myself. This done, say the enemy were forty thousand strong, we twenty would come into the field the tenth of March, or thereabouts; and we would challenge twenty of the enemy; they could not, in their honor, refuse us! Well, we would kill them; challenge twenty more, kill them; twenty more, kill them; twenty more, kill them too; and thus would we kill every man his twenty a day, that's twenty score; twenty score, that's two hundred; two hundred a day, five days a thousand: forty thousand; forty times five, five times forty, two hundred days kills them all up by computation. And this I will venture my poor gentlemanlike carcass to perform, provided there be no treason practised upon us, by fair and discreet manhood, that is, civilly by the sword.

Y. Kno.—Why, are you so sure of your hand, captain, at all times?

Bob.—Tut, never miss thrust, upon my reputation with you.

Y. Kno.—I would not stand in Downright's state then, an' you meet him, for the wealth of any one street in London.

Bob.—Why, sir, you mistake! If he were here now, by this welkin I would not draw my weapon on him! Let this gentleman do his mind: but I will bastinado him, by the bright sun wherever I meet him.

Mat.—Faith, and I'll have a fling at him, at my distance.

Enter Downright, walking over the stage.

Young Kno.—God's so! Look ye where he is; yonder he goes.

Downright.—What peevish luck have I, I cannot meet with these bragging rascals! (Exit.)

Bob.—It's not he, is it?

Y. Kno.—Yes, faith, it is he!

Mat.—I'll be hang'd, then, if that were he.

Y. Kno.—I assure you that was he.

Step.—Upon my reputation, it was he.

Bob.—Had I thought it had been he, he must not have gone so: but I can hardly be induced to believe it was he yet.

Y. Kno.—That I think, sir. But, see, he is come again!

Enter Downright.

Downright.—Oh, Pharoah's foot! have I found you! Come, draw; to your tools. Draw, gipsy, or I'll thresh you.

Bob.—Gentleman of valor, I do believe in thee, hear me—

Down.—Draw your weapon, then.

Bob.—Tall man, I never thought on't till now; body of me! I had a warrant of the peace served on me even now, as I came along, by a water-bearer; this gentleman saw it, Mr. Matthew.

(He beats him, and disarms him. Matthew runs away.)

Down.—'Sdeath, you will not draw, then?

Bob.—Hold, hold, under thy favor, forbear.

Down.—Prate again, as you like this, you whorson foist, you. You'll control the point, you! Your consort is gone; had he staid, he had shared with you, sir. (Exit Downright.)

Y. Kno.—Twenty, and kill 'em; twenty more, kill them too. Ha! ha!

Bob.—Well, gentlemen, bear witness, I was bound to the peace, by this good day.

Y. Kno.—No, faith, it's an ill day, captain; never reckon it other: but say you were bound to the peace, the law allows you to defend yourself; that will prove but a poor excuse.

Bob.—I cannot tell, sir. I desire good construction, in fair sort. I never sustained the like disgrace, by heaven. Sure I was struck with a planet thence—

Step.—No, you were struck with a stick.

Bob.—For I had no power to touch my weapon.

Y. Kno.—Ay, like enough; I have heard many that have been beaten under a planet. Go, get you to a surgeon. 'Slid, and these be your tricks, your passados, and your montontos, I'll none of them.

Bob.—Planet-struck, certainly! (Exit.)

Y. Kno.—Oh, manners! That this age should bring forth such creatures! That nature should be at leisure to make 'em! Come, coz.

Step.—Mess, I'll have this cloak.

Y. Kno.—God's will, 'tis Downright's.

Step.—Nay, it's mine now; another might have ta'en it up as well as I. I'll swear it, so I will.

Y. Kno.—How, an' he see it? He'll challenge it, assure yourself.

Step.—Ay, but he shall not ha't; I'll say, I bought it.

Y. Kno.—Take heed you buy it not too dear, coz.

(*Exeunt.*)

SCENE III.

A chamber in Kitley's house.

Enter Kitley and Cash.

Kitley.—Art thou sure, Thomas, we have pried into all and every part throughout the house? Is there no by-place, or dark corner, has escaped our searches?

Cash.—Indeed, sir, none; there's not a hole or nook unsearched by us, from the upper loft unto the cellar.

Kite.—They have conveyed him then away, or hid him in some privacy of their own—— Whilst we were searching of the dark closet, by my sister's chamber, didst thou not think that thou heard'st a rustling on the other side, and a soft tread of feet?

Cash.—Upon my truth, I did not, sir; or if you did, it might be only the vermin in the wainscot; the house is old, and overrun with them.

Kite.—It is, indeed, Thomas—we should bane these rats—dost thou understand me?—we will—they shall not harbor here; I'll cleanse my house from them, if fire or poison can effect it—I will not be tormented thus—they gnaw my brain, and burrow in my heart—I cannot bear it.

Cash.—I do not understand you, sir! Pray, be composed; these starts of passion have some cause, I fear, that touches you more nearly.

Kite.—Sorely, sorely, Thomas—it cleaves too close to me—Oh, me—(sighs)—lend me thy arm—so, good Cash.

Cash.—You tremble and look pale! Let me call assistance.

Kite.—Not for ten thousand worlds. Alas! alas! 'Tis not in medicine to give me ease:—here, here it lies.

Cash.—What, sir?

Kite.—Why—nothing, nothing—I am not sick, yet more than dead; I have a burning fever in my mind, and long for that which, having, would destroy me.

Cash.—Believe me, 'tis your fancy's imposition. Shut up your generous mind from such intruders—I'll hazard all my growing favor with you; I'll stake my present, my future welfare, that some base whispering knave—nay, pardon me, sir—hath in the best and richest soil sown seeds of rank and evil nature! Oh, my master, should they take root——

(Laughing within.)

Kite.—Hark! hark! Dost thou not hear? What think'st thou now? Are they not laughing at me? They are, they are. They have deceived the wittol, and thus they triumph in their infamy. This aggravation is not to be borne. (Laughing again.) Hark, again!—Cash, do thou unseen steal in upon them, and listen to their wanton conference.

Cash.—I shall obey you, though against my will. (Exit.)

Kite.—Against his will! Ha! It must be so. He's young, and may be bribed for them—they've various means to draw the unwary in; if it be so, I'm lost, deceived, betrayed and my bosom, my full-fraught bosom, is unlocked and opened to mockery and laughter! Heaven forbid! he cannot be that viper; sting the hand that raised and cherished him! Was this stroke added, I should be cursed. But it cannot be—no—it cannot be.

Enter Cash.

Cash.—You are musing, sir.

Kite.—I ask your pardon, Cash—ask me not why—I have wronged you, and am sorry—'tis gone.

Cash.—If you suspect my faith——

Kite.—I do not—say no more—and for my sake let it die and be forgotten—— Have you seen your mistress, and heard—whence was that noise?

Cash.—Your brother, Master Wellbred, is with them, and I found them throwing out their mirth on a very truly ridiculous subject: it is one Formal, as he styles himself, and

he appertains, so he phrases it, to Justice Clement, and would speak with you.

Kite.—With me? Art thou sure it is the Justice's clerk? Where is he?

Enter Brainworm, as Formal.

Who are you, friend?

Brainworm.—An appendix to Justice Clement, vulgarly called his clerk.

Kite.—What are your wants with me?

Brain.—None.

Kite.—Do you not want to speak with me?

Brain.—No, but my master does.

Kite.—What are the Justice's commands?

Brain.—He doth not command, but entreats Master Kitley to be with him directly, having matters of some moment to communicate unto him.

Kite.—What can it be! Say, I'll be with him instantly, and if your legs, friend, go not faster than your tongue, I shall be there before you.

Brain.—I will. Vale.

(Exit.)

Kite.—'Tis a precious fool, indeed!—I must go forth. —But, first, come hither, Thomas—I have admitted thee into the close recesses of my heart, and showed thee all my frailties, passions, everything.—Be careful of thy promise, keep good watch. Wilt thou be true, my Thomas?

Cash.—As truth's self, sir—

But, be assured, you're heaping care and trouble

Upon a sandy base; ill-placed suspicion

Recoils upon yourself—she's chaste as comely!

Believe 't she is—let her not note your humor;

Disperse the gloom upon your brow, and be

As clear as her unsullied honor.

Kite.—I will then, Cash—thou comfort'st me—I'll drive these Fiend-like fancies from me, and be myself again.

Think'st thou she has perceived my folly? "Twere

Happy if she had not—She has not—

They who know no evil, will suspect none.

Cash.—True, sir! Nor has your mind a blemish now.

 This change has gladden'd me—Here's my mistress,
 And the rest: settle your reason to accost them.

Kite.—I will, *Cash*, I will—— (Exit *Cash*.)

Enter *Wellbred*, *Dame Kitley* and *Bridget*.

Wellbred.—What are you plotting, brother *Kitley*,
 That thus of late you muse alone, and bear
 Such weighty care upon your pensive brow?

(Laughs.)

Kite.—My care is all for you, good sneering brother;
 And well I wish you'd take some wholesome counsel,
 And curb your headstrong humors; trust me, brother,
 You were to blame to raise commotions here,
 And hurt the peace and order of my house.

Well.—No harm done, brother, I warrant you.
 Since there is no harm done, anger costs
 A man nothing, and a brave man is never
 His own man till he be angry—To keep
 His valor in obscurity, is to keep himself,
 As it were, in a cloakbag. What's a brave
 Musician unless he play?
 What's a brave man, unless he fight?

Dame Kitley.—Ay, but what harm might have come of it,
 brother!

Well.—What, school'd on both sides? Pr'ythee. *Bridget*, save
 me from the rod and lecture.

(*Bridget* and *Wellbred* retire.)

Kite.—With what a decent modesty she rates him!
 My heart's at ease, and she shall see it is—
 How art thou, wife? Thou look'st both gay and comely.
 In troth thou dost—I'm sent for out, my dear,
 But I shall soon return—Indeed, my life,
 Business, that forces me abroad, grows irksome.
 I cou'd content me with less gain and 'vantage,
 To have the more at home, indeed I cou'd.

Dame Kite.—Your doubts, as well as love, may breed these
 thoughts.

Kite.—That jar untunes me.

(*Aside*.)

What dost thou say? Doubt thee?
I should as soon suspect myself—No, no.
My confidence is rooted in thy merit,
So fix'd and settled, that, wert thou inclined
To masks, to sports, and balls, where lusty youth
Leads up the wanton dance, and the raised pulse
Beats quicker measures, yet I could with joy,
With heart's ease and security—not but
I had rather thou shouldst prefer thy home,
And me, to toys and such like vanities.

Dame Kite.—But sure, my dear,

A wife may moderately use these pleasures,
Which numbers and the time give sanction to,
Without the smallest blemish on her name.

Kite.—And so she may—And I'll go with thee, child,

I will indeed—I'll lead thee there myself,
And be the foremost reveller.—I'll silence
The sneers of envy, stop the tongue of slander;
Nor will I more be pointed at, as one
Disturb'd with jealousy—

Dame Kite.—Why, were you ever so?

Kite.—What!—Ha! never—ha! ha! ha!

She stabs me home. (*Aside*.) Jealous of thee!
No, do not believe it—Speak low, my love,
Thy brother will overhear us. No, no, my dear
It cou'd not be, it cou'd not be—for—for—
What is the time now?—I shall be too late—
No, no, thou may'st be satisfied
There's not the smallest spark remaining—
Remaining! What do I say? There never was,
Nor can, nor never shall be—so be satisfied—
Is Cob within there? Give me a kiss,
My dear; there, there, now we are reconciled—
I'll be back immediately—Good-bye, good-bye—
Ha! ha! Jealous! I shall burst my sides with laughing.
Ha! ha! Cob, where are you, Cob? Ha! ha! (*Exit*.)

Wellbred and Bridget come forward.

Well.—What have you done, to make our husband part so merry from you? He has of late been little given to laughter.

Dame Kite.—He laughed, indeed, but seemingly without mirth. His behavior is new and strange. He is much agitated, and has some whimsy in his head, that puzzles mine to read it.

Well.—'Tis jealousy, good sister, and writ so largely that the blind may read it; have you not perceived it yet?

Dame Kite.—If I have, 'tis not always prudent that my tongue should betray my eyes, so far my wisdom tends, good brother, and little more I boast.— But what makes him ever calling for Cob so? I wonder how he can employ him.

Well.—Indeed, sister, to ask how he employs Cob, is a necessary question for you, that are his wife, and a thing not very easy for you to be satisfied in—but this I'll assure you. Cob's wife is an excellent procuress, sister, and oftentimes your husband haunts her house; marry, to what end, I cannot altogether accuse him. Imagine what you think convenient. But I have known fair hides have foul hearts ere now, sister.

Dame Kite.—Never said you truer than that, brother; so much I can tell you for your learning. O, ho! is this the fruit of 's jealousy? I thought some game was in the wind, he acted with so much tenderness but now; but I'll be quit with him.— Thomas! Fetch your hat, and go with me; I'll get my hood, and out the backward way. I would to fortune I could take him there. I'd return him his own, I warrant him! I'd fit him for his jealousy! (Exit, Cash follows.)

Well.—Ha! ha! So e'en let them go; this may make sport anon—What! Brainworm?

Enter Brainworm.

Brainworm.—I saw the merchant turn the corner and come back to tell you, all goes well; wind and tide, my master.

Well.—But how got'st thou this apparel of the justice's man?

Brain.—Marry, sir, my proper fine penman would needs bestow the grist o' me at the Windmill, to hear some martial discourse, where I so marshalled him, that I made him drunk with admiration; and because too much heat was the cause of his distemper. I stripped him stark naked, as he lay along asleep, and borrowed his suit to deliver this counterfeit message in, leaving a rusty armor, and an old brown bill, to watch him till my return; which shall be when I have pawned his apparel, and spent the better part of the money, perhaps.

Well.—Well, thou art a successful, merry knave, Brainworm; his absence will be subject for more mirth. I pray thee, return to thy young master, and will him to meet me and my sister Bridget at the Tower instantly; for here, tell him, the house is so stored with jealousy, there is no room for love to stand upright in. We must get our fortunes committed to some large prison, say; and than the Tower, I know no better air, nor where the liberty of the house may do us more present service. Away! (Exit Brainworm.)

Bridget.—What, is this the engine that you told me of? What farther meaning have you in the plot?

Well.—That you may know, fair sister-in-law, how happy a thing it is to be fair and beautiful.

Bridg.—That touches not me, brother?

Well.—That's true; that's even the fault of it. Well, there's a dear and well respected friend of mine, sister, stands very strongly and worthily affected toward you, and hath vowed to inflame whole bonfires of zeal at his heart, in honor of your perfections. I have already engaged my promise to bring you where you shall hear him confirm much more. Ned Knowell is the man, sister. There's no exception against the party; you are ripe for a husband, and a minute's loss to such an occasion is a great trespass in a wise beauty. What say you, sister? On my soul, he loves you; will you give him the meeting?

Bridg.—'Faith, I had very little confidence in my own constancy, brother, if I durst not meet a man; but this notion of yours savors of an old knight-adventurer's servant, a little too much, methinks.

Well.—What's that, sister?

Bridg.—Marry, of the go-between.

Well.—No matter if it did; I would be such a one for my friend. But see, who is returned, to hinder us.

Enter *Kitely*.

Kitely.—What villainy is this! Called out on a false message! This was some plot. I was not sent for. Bridget, where's your sister?

Bridg.—I think she be gone forth, sir.

Kite.—How! is my wife gone forth? Whither, for heaven's sake?

Bridg.—She's gone abroad with Thomas.

Kite.—Abroad with Thomas! Oh, that villain cheats me!
He hath discover'd all unto my wife;
Beast that I was to trust him. Whither, I pray
You, went she?

Bridg.—I know not, sir.

Well.—I'll tell you, brother, whither I suspect she's gone.

Kite.—Whither, good brother?

Well.—To Cob's house, I believe; but keep my counsel.

Kite.—I will, I will. To Cob's house! Does she haunt there?

She's gone on purpose now to cuckold me,
With that lewd rascal, who, to win her favor,
Hath told her all—Why wou'd you let her go?

Well.—Because she's not my wife; if she were, I'd keep her to her tether.

Kite.—So, so; now 'tis plain. I shall go mad
With my misfortunes; now they pour in torrents;
I'm bruted by my wife, betray'd by my servant;
Mock'd at by my relations, pointed at by my neighbors,
Despised by myself.—There is nothing left now
But to revenge myself first, next hang myself;
And then—all my cares will be over. (Exit.)

Bridg.—He storms most loudly; sure you have gone too far in this.

Well.—'Twill all end right, depend upon 't.—But let us lose no time; the coast is clear; away, away; the affair is worth it, and cries haste.

Bridg.—I trust me to your guidance, brother, and so fortune for us. (Exeunt.)

ACT V. SCENE I.

Stocks Market.

Enter Matthew and Bobadil.

Matthew.—I wonder, captain, what they will say of my going away? ha!

Bobadil.—Why, what should they say, but as of a discreet gentleman; quick, wary, respectful of nature's fair lineaments, and that's all?

Mat.—Why, so! but what can they say of your beating?

Bob.—A rude part, a touch with soft wood, a kind of gross battery used, lain on strongly, borne most patiently, and that's all. But wherefore do I wake their remembrance? I was fascinated, by Jupiter, fascinated! but I will be unwitched, and revenged by law.

Mat.—Do you hear? Is't not best to get a warrant and have him arrested, and brought before Justice Clement?

Bob.—It were not amiss; 'would we had it!

Mat.—Why, here comes his man, let's speak to him.

Bob.—Agreed. Do you speak.

Enter Brainworm, as Formal.

Mat.—'Save you, sir.

Brainworm.—With all my heart, sir.

Mat.—Sir, there is one Downright hath abused this gentleman and myself, and we determine to make ourselves amends by law; now, if you would do us the favor to procure a warrant, to bring him before your master, you shall be well considered of, I assure you, sir.

Brain.—Sir, you know my service is my living; such favors as these, gotten of my master, is his only preferment,

and therefore you must consider me, as I may make benefit of my place.

Mat.—How is that, sir?

Brain.—Faith, sir, the thing is extraordinary, and the gentleman may be of great account. Yet, be what he will, if you will lay me down a brace of angels in my hand, you shall have it; otherwise not.

Mat.—How shall we do, captain? He asks a brace of angels—you have no money?

Bob.—Not a cross, by fortune.

Mat.—Nor I, as I am a gentleman, but twopence left of my two shillings in the morning, for wine and radish. Let's find him some pawn.

Bob.—Pawn! We have none to the value of his demand.

Mat.—O, yes, I can pawn my ring here.

Bob.—And, harkye, he shall have my trusty Toledo, too; I believe I shall have no service for it to-day.

Mat.—Do you hear sir? We have no store of money at this time, but you shall have good pawns; look you, sir, I will pledge this ring, and that gentleman his Toledo, because we would have it despatched.

Brain.—I am content, sir; I will get you the warrant presently. What's his name, say you? Downright?

Mat.—Ay, ay, George Downright.

Brain.—Well, gentlemen, I'll procure you the warrant presently; but who will you have to serve it?

Mat.—That's true, captain, that must be considered.

Bob.—Body o' me, I know not! 'Tis a service of danger!

Brain.—Why, you had best get one of the varlets o' the city, a sergeant; I'll appoint you one, if you please.

Mat.—Will you, sir? Why, we can wish no better.

Bob.—We'll leave it to you, sir.

(Exeunt Bobadil and Matthew.)

Brain.—This is rare! Now will I go pawn this cloak of the justice's man's, at the broker's, for a varlet's suit, and be the varlet myself, and so get money on all sides. (Exit.)

SCENE II.

The street, before Cob's house.

Enter Knowell.

Knowell.—O, here it is; I have found it now—Hoa, who is within here? (Tib appears at the window.)

Tib.—I am within, sir; what is your pleasure?

Kno.—To know who is within besides yourself.

Tib.—Why, sir, you are no constable, I hope?

Kno.—O, fear you the constable? then I doubt not you have some guests within deserve that fear—I'll fetch him straight.

Tib.—For heaven's sake, sir—

Kno.—Go to! Come, tell me, is not young Knowell here?

Tib.—Young Knowell! I know none such, sir, o' my honesty.

Kno.—Your honesty, dame! It flies too lightly from you. There is no way but fetch the constable.

Tib.—The constable! The man is mad, I think.

Enter Cash and Dame Kitely.

Cash.—Hoa! who keeps house here?

Kno.—Oh, this is the female copesmate of my son. Now shall I meet him straight. (Aside.)

Dame Kitely.—Knock, Thomas, hard.

Cash.—Hoa! good wife.

Tib.—Why, what's the matter with you?

Dame Kite.—Why, woman, grieves it you to ope the door? Belike, you get something to keep it shut.

Tib.—What mean these questions, pray you?

Dame Kite.—So strange you make it! Is not my husband here?

Kno.—Her husband! (Aside.)

Dame Kite.—My tried and faithful husband, Master Kitely.

Tib.—I hope he needs not to be tried here.

Dame Kite.—Come hither, Cash—I see my turtle coming to his haunts: let us retire. (They retire.)

Kno.—This must be some device to mock me withal.

Soft—who is this?—Oh! 'tis my son disguised.

I'll watch him, and surprise him.

Enter Kitely, muffled in a cloak.

Kitely.—'Tis truth, I see; there she skulks.

But I will fetch her from her hold—I will—

I tremble so, I scarce have power to do the justice

Her infamy demands.

(As Kitely goes forward, Dame Kitely and Knowell lay hold of him.)

Kno.—Have I trapped you youth? You cannot 'scape me now.

Dame Kite.—O, sir! have I forestall'd your honest market?

Found your close walks! you stand amazed

Now, do you? Ah, hide, hide your face, for shame!

I' faith, I am glad I've found you out at last.

What is your jewel, trow? In: come, let's see her; fetch

Forth the wanton dame—If she be fairer,

In any honest judgment, than myself,

I'll be content with it: but she is change;

O, you traitor!

Kno.—What mean you, woman? Let go your hold.

I see the counterfeit—I am his father, and claim him as my own.

Kite.—(Discovering himself.) I am your cuckold, and claim my vengeance.

Dame Kite.—What, do you wrong me, and insult me too?

Thou faithless man!

Kite.—Out on thy more than strumpet's impudence!

Steal'st thou thus to thy haunts? and have I taken

Thy bawd and thee, and thy companion,

Close at your villany, and would'st thou 'scuse it

With this stale jest, accusing me?

O, old incontinent, dost thou not shame

To have a mind so hot; and to entice,
And feed the enticement of a wanton woman?

Dame Kite.—Out! I defy thee, thou dissembling wretch!

Kite.—Defy me, strumpet! Ask thy pander here,
Can he deny it, or that wicked elder?

Kno.—Why, hear you, sir—

Cash.—Master, 'tis in vain to reason, while these passions
blind you. I'm grieved to see you thus.

Kite.—Tut, tut, never speak, I see through every
Veil you cast upon your treachery; but I have
Done with you, and root you from my heart for ever.
For you, sir, thus I demand my honor's due;
Resolved to cool your heat, or end my shame.

(Draws.)

Kno.—What lunacy is this? Put up your sword, and undeceive yourself. No arm, that e'er poised weapon can affright me. But I pity folly, nor cope with madness.

Kite.—I will have proofs—I will—so you, good wife bawd, Cob's wife; and you, that make your husband such a monster: and you, young pander, I'll ha' you every one before the justice. Nay, you shall answer it; I charge you go.

(Goes into the house, and brings out Tib.)

Kno.—Marry, with all my heart, sir, I go willingly.

Kite.—Come, will you go?

Dame Kite.—Go, to thy shame, believe it.

Kite.—Though shame and sorrow both my heart betide,
Come on—I must and will be satisfied. (Exeunt.)

SCENE III.

Stocks Market.

Enter Brainworm.

Brainworm.—Well, of all my disguises yet, now am I most like myself; being in this sergeant's gown. A man of my present profession never counterfeits, till he lays hold upon a debtor, and says he 'rests him; for then he brings him to

all manner of unrest. A kind of little kings we are, bearing the diminutive of a mace, made like a young artichoke, that always carries pepper and salt in itself. Well, I know not what danger I undergo by this exploit; 'pray heaven I come well off!

Enter Master Matthew and Bobadil.

Matthew.—See, I think, yonder is the varlet, by his gown. 'Save you, friend: are you not here by appointment of Justice Clement's man?

Brain.—Yes, an' please you, sir, he told me two gentlemen had willed him to procure a warrant from his master, which I have about me, to be served on one Downright.

Mat.—It is honestly done of you both! and see, where the party comes, you must arrest. Serve it upon him quickly, before he be aware—

Enter Stephen, in Downright's cloak.

Bobadil.—Bear back, Master Matthew.

Brain.—Master Downright, I arrest you i' the queen's name, and must carry you before a justice, by virtue of this warrant.

Stephen.—Me, friend! I am no Downright, I. I am Master Stephen; you do not well to arrest me, I am in nobody's bonds or books. A plague on you, heartily, for making me thus afraid before my time.

Brain.—Why, no, you are deceived, gentlemen.

Bob.—He wears such a cloak, and that deceived us; but, see, here he comes indeed! this is he, officer.

Enter Downright.

Downright.—Why, how now, Signor Gull! Are you turned filcher of late? Come, deliver my cloak.

Step.—Your cloak, sir! I bought it even now in open market.

Brain.—Master Downright, I have a warrant I must serve upon you, procured by these two gentlemen.

Down.—These gentlemen! These rascals!

Brain.—Keep the peace, I charge you.

Down.—I obey thee. What must I do, officer?

Brain.—Go before Master Justice Clement, to answer what they can object against you, sir. I will use you kindly, sir.

Mat.—Come, let's before, and make the justice, captain—

(Exit.)

Bob.—The varlet's a tall man, before heaven! (Exit.)

Down.—Gull, you'll gi' me my cloak!

Step.—Sir, I bought it, and I'll keep it.

Down.—You will?

Step.—Ay, that I will.

Down.—Officer, there's thy fee—arrest him.

Brain.—Master Stephen, I must arrest you.

Step.—Arrest me, I scorn it; there, take your nasty cloak, I'll none on't.

Down.—Nay, that shall not serve your turn, now, sir. Officer, I'll go with thee to the justice's. Bring him along.

Step.—Why, is not here your cloak? What would you have?

Down.—I'll ha' you answer it.

Brain.—Sir, I'll take your word, and this gentleman, too, for his appearance.

Down.—I'll ha' no words taken. Bring him along.

Brain.—So, so, I have made a fair mash on't!

Step.—Must I go?

Brain.—I know no remedy, Master Stephen.

Down.—Come along before me here. I do not love your hanging look behind.

Step.—Why, sir, I hope you cannot hang me for it. Can he, fellow?

Brain.—I think not, sir. It is but a whipping matter, sure!

Step.—Why, then let him do his worst, I am resolute.

(Exeunt.)

SCENE IV.

A hall in Justice Clement's house.

Enter Clement, Knowell, Kitely, Dame Kitely, Tib, Cash, Cob and servants.

Clement.—Nay, but stay, stay, give me leave. My chair, sirrah. You, master Knowell, say, you went thither to meet your son?

Knowell.—Ay, sir.

Clem.—But who directed you thither?

Kno.—That did mine own man, sir.

Clem.—Where is he?

Kno.—Nay, I know not, now; I left him with your clerk; and appointed him to stay for me.

Clem.—My clerk! about what time was this?

Kno.—Marry, between one and two, as I take it.

Clem.—And what time came my man with the false message to you, Master Kitely?

Kitely.—After two, sir.

Clem.—Very good: but, Mrs. Kitely, how chance it, that you were at Cob's? Ha?

Dame Kitely.—An' please you, sir, I'll tell you. My brother Wellbred told me, that Cob's house was a suspected place——

Clem.—So it appears, methinks; but on.

Dame Kite.—And that my husband used thither daily.

Clem.—No matter, so he used himself well, mistress.

Dame Kite.—True, sir; but you know what grows by such haunts, oftentimes.

Clem.—I see rank fruits of a jealous brain, Mistress Kitely. But did you find your husband there, in that case, as you suspected?

Kite.—I found her there, sir.

Clem.—Did you so? that alters the case. Who gave you knowledge of your wife's being there?

Kite.—Marry, that did my brother Wellbred.

Clem.—How! Wellbred first tell her, then tell you after? Where is Wellbred?

Kite.—Gone with my sister, sir, I know not whither.

Clem.—Why, this is a mere trick, a device; you are gulled in this most grossly, all! Alas, poor wench! wert thou suspected for this?

Tib.—Yes, an't please you.

Clem.—I smell mischief here, plot and contrivance, Master Kitely. However, if you will step into the next room, with your wife, and think coolly of matters, you'll find some trick has been played you—I fear here have been jealousies on both parts, and the wags have been merry with you.

Kite.—I begin to feel it—I'll take your counsel.—Will you go in, dame?

Dame Kite.—I will have justice, Mr. Kitely.

(*Exeunt Kitely, Dame Kitely and Tib.*)

Clem.—You will be a woman, Mrs. Kitely, that I see.—How, now, what's the matter?

Enter William.

William.—Sir, there's a gentleman i' the court without, desires to speak with your worship.

Clem.—A gentleman! What's he?

Will.—A soldier, sir, he says.

Clem.—A soldier! My sword, quickly. A soldier speak with me! Stand by. I will end your matters anon—Let the soldier enter. Now, sir, what ha' you to say to me?

(*Exit William.*)

Enter Bobadil and Matthew.

Bobadil.—By your worship's favor—

Clem.—Nay, keep out, sir, I know not your pretence; you send me word, sir, you are a soldier? Why, sir, you shall be answered here: here be them have been among soldiers. Sir, your pleasure?

Bob.—Faith, sir, so it is; this gentleman and myself have been most uncivilly wronged and beaten by one Downright, a coarse fellow about the town here; and, for my own part, I protest, being a man in no sort given to this filthy humor of quarrelling, he hath assaulted me in the way of my peace; despoiled me of mine honor, disarmed me of my weapons, and rudely laid me along in the open streets, when I not so much as once offered to resist him.

Clem.—Oh, God's precious! Is this the soldier?—Lie there, my sword, 'twill make him swoon, I fear; he is not fit to look on't, that will put up a blow!

Matthew.—An't please your worship, he was bound to the peace.

Clem.—Why, an' he were, sir, his hands were not bound, were they?

Enter servant.

Servant.—There's one of the varlets of the city, sir, has brought two gentlemen here, one upon your worship's warrant.

Clem.—My warrant?

Serv.—Yes, sir, the officer says, procured by these two.

Clem.—Bid him come in.—Set by this picture.—What, Mr. Downright! are you brought at Mr. Freshwater's suit here?

Enter Downright, Stephen and Brainworm.

Downright.—I' faith, sir. And here's another, brought at my suit.

Clem.—What are you, sir?

Stephen.—A gentleman, sir.— Oh, uncle!

Clem.—Uncle! Who, Master Knowell?

Kno.—Ay, sir, this is a wise kinsman of mine.

Step.—God's my witness, uncle, I am wronged here, monstrously; he charges me with stealing of his cloak, and would I might never stir, if I did not find it in the street by chance.

Down.—Oh, did you find it, now? You said you bought it ere-while.

Step.—And you said I stole it. Nay, now my uncle is here, I'll do well enough with you.

Clem.—Well, let this breathe awhile. You that have cause to complain there, stand forth. Had you my warrant for this gentleman's apprehension?

Bob.—Ay, an't please your worship—

Clem.—Nay, do not speak in passion so. Where had you it?

Bob.—Of your clerk, sir.

Clem.—That's well, an' my clerk can make warrants, and my hand not at them! Where is the warrant?—Officer, have you it?

Brainworm.—No, sir, your worship's man, Master Formal, bid me do it for these gentlemen, and he would be my discharge.

Clem.—Why, Master Downright, are you such a novice to be served, and never see the warrant!

Down.—Sir, he did not serve it on me.

Clem.—No! how then?

Down.—Marry, sir, he came to me, and said, he must serve it, and he would use me kindly, and so—

(Bobadil and Matthew steal off.)

Clem.—O, God's pity, was it so, sir? He must serve it. Give me a warrant, I must serve one too—you knave, you slave, you rogue, do you say you must, sirrah? Away with him to the gaol. I'll teach you a trick for your must, sir.

Brain.—Good sir, I beseech you be good to me.

Clem.—Tell him, he shall to the gaol: away with him, I say.

Brain.—Ay, sir, if you will commit me, it shall be for committing more than this. I will not lose by my travail any grain of my fame certain. (Throws off his disguise.)

Clem.—How is this?

Kno.—My man, Brainworm!

Step.—O yes, uncle! Brainworm has been with my cousin Edward and me, all this day.

Clem.—I told you all, there was some device.

Brain.—Nay, excellent Justice, since I have laid myself thus open to you, now stand strong for me, both with your sword and your balance.

Clem.—Body o' me, a merry knave! Give me a bowl of sack.—If he belongs to you, Master Knowell, I bespeak your patience.

Brain.—That is it I have most need of.—Sir, if you'll pardon me only, I'll glory in all the rest of my exploits.

Kno.—Sir, you know I love not to have my favors come hard from me. You have your pardon; though I suspect you shrewdly for being of counsel with my son against me.

Brain.—Yes, faith, I have, sir; though you retained me doubly this morning for yourself; first, as Brainworm, after, as Fitzsword. I was your reformed soldier. 'Twas I sent you to Cob's upon the errand without end.

Kno.—Is it possible! Or that thou shouldst disguise thyself so as I should not know thee?

Brain.—O sir! this has been the day of my metamorphosis; it is not that shape alone that I have run through to-day. I brought Master Kately a message, too, in the form of Master Justice's man here, to draw him out of the way, as well as your worship, while Master Wellbred might make a conveyance of Mistress Bridget to my young master.

Kno.—My son is not married, I hope?

Brain.—Faith, sir, they are both as sure as love, a priest, and three thousand pounds, which is her portion, can make them; and by this time are ready to bespeak their wedding supper at the Windmill, except some friend here prevent them, and invite them home.

Clem.—Marry, that will I; I thank thee for putting me in mind on't. Sirrah, go you and fetch them hither, upon my warrant. Neither's friends have cause to be sorry if I know the young couple aright.—But, I pray thee, what hast thou done with my man, Formal?

Brain.—Faith, sir, after some ceremony past, as making him drunk, first with story, and then with wine, but all in kindness, and stripping him to his shirt, I left him in that cool vein; departed, sold your worship's warrant to these

two, pawned his livery for that varlet's gown to serve it in, and thus have brought myself, by my activity, to your worship's consideration.

Clem.—And I will consider thee in a cup of sack. Here's to thee, which having drank off, this is my sentence—pledge me. Thou has done, or assisted to nothing, in my judgment, but deserves to be pardoned for the wit of the offense. Go into the next room; let Master Kitely into this whimsical business, and if he does not forgive thee, he has less mirth in him than an honest man ought to have.

Step.—And what shall I do?

Clem.—O! I had lost a sheep, an' he had not bleated. Why, sir, you shall give Mr. Downright his cloak, and I will entreat him to take it. A trencher and a napkin you shall have in the buttery, and keep Cob and his wife company here; whom I will entreat first to be reconciled; and you to endeavor with your wit to keep them so.

Step.—I'll do my best.

Clem.—Call Master Kitely and his wife, there.

Enter Kitely and Dame Kitely.

Did I not tell you there was a plot against you?—Did I not smell it out, as a wise magistrate ought?—Have not you traced, have not you found it, eh, Master Kitely?

Kite.—I have—I confess my folly, and own I have deserved what I have suffered for it. The trial has been severe, but it is past. All I have to ask now, is, that, as my folly is cured, and my persecutors forgiven, my shame may be forgotten.

Clem.—That will depend upon yourself, Master Kitely; do not yourself create the food for mischief. And the mischievous will not prey upon you. But, come, let a general reconciliation go round, and let all discontents be laid aside. You, Mr. Downright, put off your anger: you, Master Knowell, your cares. And do you, Master Kitely, and your wife, put off your jealousies.

Kite.—Sir, thus they go from me: kiss me, my wife.

See what a drove of horns fly in the air,

Wing'd with my cleansed and my credulous breath:
Watch 'em, suspicious eyes, watch where they fall,
See, see, on heads, that think they've none at all.
O, what a plenteous world of this will come!
When air rains horns, all may be sure of some.

Soon after the appearance of *Every Man in His Humor* was presented, probably at the Globe theatre, then newly built, the elaborate comedy of *Every Man Out of His Humor*. It was afterward played at the court of Queen Elizabeth, though it does not appear to have brought any pecuniary return to the most learned of her dramatists. If the sunshine of court was golden, it was, in her reign at least, only metaphorically golden.

THE
KNIGHT OF THE BURNING PESTLE
A BURLESQUE

BY

BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

THE PROLOGUE.

THEN A CITIZEN.

THE CITIZEN'S WIFE, AND RALPH, her man,
sitting below amidst the spectators.

A RICH MERCHANT.

JASPER, his apprentice.

MASTER HUMPHREY, a friend to the Merchant.

LUCE, the Merchant's daughter.

MISTRESS MERRY-THOUGHT, Jasper's mother.

MICHAEL, a second son of Mistress Merry-thought.

OLD MR. MERRY-THOUGHT.

A SQUIRE.

A DWARF.

A TAPSTER.

A BOY that danceth and singeth.

AN HOST.

A BARBER.

TWO KNIGHTS.

A CAPTAIN.

A SERGEANT.

SOLDIERS.

This is, in a sort, an English version of *Don Quixote*, as a burlesque on the affectations of chivalry. It was completed, as is said, in eight days, and was performed when the public were allowed to have seats upon the stage, which explains passages otherwise almost unintelligible. The play has all the ear-marks of Beaumont, who wrote under the influence of Ben Jonson, though doubtless Fletcher contributed some suggestions, and, it may be, a few of the scenes. "Beaumont," says an eminent critic, "was the earliest as well as the ablest disciple of the master whose mantle was afterward to be shared among the poets of a younger generation." The admirable study of the worthy citizen and his wife, who introduce to the stage and escort with their applause *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* through his adventurous career to its timely end, has all the force and fullness of Jonson's humor, with more of freshness and freedom.

Enter Prologue.

From all that's near the court, from all that's great
Within the compass of the city walls,
We now have brought our scene.

Enter Citizen.

Citizen.—Hold your peace, good-man boy.

Prologue.—What do you mean, sir?

Cit.—That you have no good meaning: these seven years there hath been plays at this house, I have observed it, you have still girds at citizens; and now you call your play "The London Merchant." Down with your title, boy, down with your title.

Pro.—Are you a member of the noble city?

Cit.—I am.

Pro.—And a freeman?

Cit.—Yea, and a grocer.

Pro.—So, grocer, then by your sweet favor, we intend no abuse to the city.

Cit.—No, sir; yes, sir; if you were not resolved to play the jacks, what need you to study for new subjects, purposely to abuse your betters? Why could not you be contented, as well as others, with the legend of Whittington, or the Life and Death of Sir Thomas Gresham? with the building of the Royal Exchange? or the story of Queen Eleanor, with the rearing of London Bridge upon woolsacks?

Pro.—You seem to be an understanding man; what would you have us do, sir?

Cit.—Why, present something notably in honor of the commons of the city.

Pro.—Why, what do you say to the Life and Death of fat Drake, or the repairing of Fleet privies?

Cit.—I do not like that; but I will have a citizen, and he shall be of my own trade.

Pro.—Oh, you should have told us your mind a month since, our play is ready to begin now.

Cit.—'Tis all one for that, I will have a grocer, and he shall do admirable things.

Pro.—What will you have him do?

Cit.—Marry I will have him——

Wife.—Husband, husband! (Wife below.)

Ralph.—Peace, mistress. (Ralph below.)

Wife.—Hold thy peace, Ralph; I know what I do, I warrant ye. Husband, husband!

Cit.—What sayest thou, cony?

Wife.—Let him kill a lion with a pestle, husband; let him kill a lion with a pestle.

Cit.—So he shall, I'll have him kill a lion with a pestle.

Wife.—Husband, shall I come up, husband?

Cit.—Ay, cony. Ralph, help your mistress up this way: pray, gentlemen, make her a little room; I pray you, sir, lend me your hand to help up my wife; I thank you, sir, so.

Wife.—By your leave, gentlemen all, I'm something troublesome, I'm a stranger here, I was ne'er at one of these plays, as they say, before; but I should have seen "Jane Shore" once; and my husband hath promised me anytime this twelvemonth, to carry me to the "Bold Beauchamps," but in truth he did not; I pray you bear with me.

Cit.—Boy, let my wife and me have a couple of stools, and then begin, and let the grocer do rare things.

Pro.—But, sir, we have never a boy to play him, every one hath a part already.

Wife.—Husband, husband, for God's sake let Ralph play him; beshrew me if I do not think he will go beyond them all.

Cit.—Well remembered wife; come up Ralph; I'll tell you, gentlemen, let them but lend him a suit of reparable, and necessities, and by gad, if any of them all blow wind in the tail on him, I'll be hanged.

Wife.—I pray you, youth, let him have a suit of reparable: I'll be sworn, gentlemen, my husband tells you true, he will act you sometimes at our house, that all the neighbors cry out on him: he will fetch you up a couraging part so in the garret, that we are all as feared I warrant you, that we quake again. We fear our children with him, if they be never so unruly; do but cry "Ralph comes, Ralph comes" to them, and they'll be as quiet as lambs. Hold up thy head, Ralph, show the gentlemen what thou canst do; speak a huffing part, I warrant you the gentlemen will accept of it.

Cit.—Do, Ralph, do.

Ralph.—By heaven (methinks) it were an easy leap
To pluck bright honor from the pale-faced moon,
Or dive into the bottom of the sea,

Where never fathom line touched any ground,
And pluck drowned honor from the lake of hell.

Cit.—How say you, gentlemen, is it not as I told you?

Wife.—Nay, gentlemen, he hath played before, my husband says, "Musidorus," before the wardens of our company.

Cit.—Ay, and he should have played "Jeronimo" with a shoemaker for a wager.

Pro.—He shall have a suit of apparel, if he will go in.

Cit.—In, Ralph, in, Ralph, and set out the grocers in their kind, if thou lovest me.

Wife.—I warrant our Ralph will look finely when he's dressed.

Pro.—But what will you have it called?

Cit.—"The Grocer's Honor."

Pro.—Methinks "The Knight of the Burning Pestle" were better.

Wife.—I'll be sworn, husband, that's as good a name as can be.

Cit.—Let it be so, begin, begin; my wife and I will sit down.

Pro.—I pray you do.

Cit.—What stately music have you? Have you shawns?

Pro.—Shawns? No.

Cit.—No? I'm a thief if my mind did not give me so. Ralph plays a stately part, and he must need have shawns: I'll be at the charge of them myself rather than we'll be without them.

Pro.—So you are like to be.

Cit.—Why, and so I will be; there's two shillings; let's have the waits of Southwark; they are as rare fellows as any are in England; and that will fetch them all o'er the water with a vengeance, as if they were mad.

Pro.—You shall have them; will you sit down, then?

Cit.—Ay, come, wife.

Wife.—Sit you, merry all gentlemen; I'm bold to sit among you for my ease.

Pro.—From all that's near the court, from all that's great
Within the compass of the city walls,
We now have brought our scene. Fly far from hence
All private taxes, all immodest phrases,
Whatever may but show like vicious,
For wicked mirth never true pleasure brings,
But honest minds are pleased with honest things.
Thus much for that we do. But for Ralph's part you
must answer for't yourself.

Cit.—Take you no care for Ralph; he'll discharge himself,
I warrant you.

Wife.—I'faith, gentlemen, I'll give my word for Ralph.

ACT I. SCENE I.

Enter Merchant and Jasper, his man.

Merchant.—Sirrah, I'll make you know you are my prentice,
And whom my charitable love redeem'd
Even from the fall of fortune; gave thee heat
And growth, to be what now thou art; new cast thee,
Adding the trust of all I have at home,
In foreign staples, or upon the sea,
To thy direction; tied the good opinions
Both of myself and friends to thy endeavors—
So fair were thy beginnings. But with these,
As I remember, you had never charge
To love your master's daughter, and even then,
When I had found a wealthy husband for her,
I take it, sir, you had not; but, however,
I'll break the neck of that commission,
And make you know you're but a merchant's factor.

Jasper.—Sir, I do lib'rally confess I'm yours,
Bound both by love and duty to your service;
In which my labor hath been all my profit.
I have not lost in bargain, nor delighted
To wear your honest gains upon my back,
Nor have I giv'n a pension to my blood,
Or lavishly in play consum'd your stock.
These, and the miseries that do attend them,

I dare with innocence proclaim are strangers
 To all my temperate actions; for your daughter,
 If there be any love to my deservings
 Borne by her virtuous self, I cannot stop it:
 Nor am I able to refrain her wishes.
 She's private to herself, and best of knowledge
 Whom she will make so happy as to sigh for.
 Besides, I cannot think you mean to match her
 Unto a fellow of so lame a presence,
 One that hath little left of nature in him.

Merch.—'Tis very well, sir, I can tell your wisdom
 How all this shall be cured.

Jasp.— Your care becomes you.

Merch.—And thus it shall be, sir; I here discharge you
 My house and service. Take your liberty,
 And when I want a son I'll send for you. (Exit.)

Jasp.—These be the fair rewards of them that love;
 Oh, you that live in freedom never prove
 The travail of a mind led by desire.

Enter Luce.

Luce.—Why, how now, friend; struck with my father's thunder?

Jasp.—Struck, and struck dead, unless the remedy
 Be full of speed and virtue; I am now,
 What I expected long, no more your father's.

Luce.—But mine.

Jasp.—But yours, and only yours I am,
 That's all I have to keep me from the statute;
 You dare be constant still?

Luce.— Oh, fear me not.
 In this I dare be better than a woman.
 Nor shall his anger nor his offers move me,
 Were they both equal to a prince's power.

Jasp.—You know my rival?

Luce.— Yes, and love him dearly,
 E'en as I love an ague, or foul weather;
 I prithee, Jasper, fear him not.

Jasp.— Oh, no;
I do not mean to do him so much kindness.
But to our own desires: you know the plot
We both agreed on.

Luce.— Yes, and will perform
My part exactly.

Jasp.— I desire no more;
Farewell, and keep my heart, 'tis yours.

Luce.— I take it,
He must do miracles, makes me forsake it. (Exeunt.)

Cit.—Fie upon 'em, little infidels, what a matter's here now? Well, I'll be hang'd for a half-penny if there be not some abomination knavery in this play; well, let 'em look to it, Ralph must come, and if there be any tricks a-brewing—

Wife.—Let 'em brew and bake too, husband, a God's name. Ralph will find all out, I warrant you, and they were older than they are. I pray, my pretty youth, is Ralph ready?

Boy.—He will be presently.

Wife.—Now I pray you make my commendations unto him, and withal, carry him this stick of licorice; tell him his mistress sent it him, and bid him bite a piece, 'twill open his pipes the better, say.

Enter Merchant and Master Humphrey.

Merchant.—Come, sir, she's yours, upon my faith she's yours,
You have my hand; for other idle lets,
Between your hopes and her, thus with a wind
They're scattered, and no more. My wanton prentice,
That like a bladder blew himself with love,
I have let out, and sent him to discover
New masters yet unknown.

Humphrey.— I thank you, sir,
Indeed I thank you, sir; and ere I stir,
It shall be known, however you do deem,
I am of gentle blood and gentle seem.

Merch.—Oh, sir, I know it certain.

Hum.— Sir, my friend,
Although, as writers say, all things have end,

And that we call a pudding, hath his two,
 Oh, let it not seem strange, I pray, to you,
 If in this bloody simile I put
 My love, more endless than frail things or gut.

Wife.—Husband, I prithee, sweet lamb, tell me one thing,
 but tell me truly. Stay, youths, I beseech you, till I question
 my husband.

Cit.—What is it, mouse?

Wife.—Sirrah, didst thou ever see a prettier child? how it
 behaves itself, I warrant you: and speaks and looks, and perts
 up the head? I pray you, brother, with your favor, were you
 never one of Mr. Muncaster's scholars?

Cit.—Chicken, I prithee heartily contain thyself; the chil-
 der are pretty childer, but when Ralph comes, lamb!

Wife.—Ay, when Ralph comes, cony! Well, my youth, you
 may proceed.

Merch.—Well, sir, you know my love, and rest, I hope,
 Assured of my consent; get but my daughter's,
 And wed her when you please; you must be bold,
 And clap in close unto her; come, I know
 You've language good enough to win a wench.

Wife.—A toity tyrant, hath been an old stringer in his
 days, I warrant him.

Hum.—I take your gentle offer, and withal
 Yield love again for love reciprocal.

Merch.—What, Luce, within there?

Enter Luce.

Luce.—

Called you, sir?

Merch.—

I did;

Give entertainment to this gentleman;
 And see you be not froward: to her, sir,
 My presence will but be an eyesore to you. (Exit.)

Hum.—Fair Mistress Luce, how do you; are you well?

Give me your hand, and then I pray you tell,
 How doth your little sister, and your brother,
 And whether you love me or any other?

Luce.—Sir, these are quickly answered.

Hum.— So they are,
Where women are not cruel; but how far
Is it now distant from the place we are in,
Unto that blessed place, your father's warren.

Luce.—What makes you think of that, sir?

Hum.— E'en that face,
For stealing rabbits whilome in that place,
God Cupid, or the keeper, I know not whether,
Unto my cost and charges brought you thither,
And there began—

Luce.—Your game, sir.

Hum.— Let no game,
Or anything that tendeth to the same,
Be evermore remembered, thou fair killer,
For whom I sate me down and brake my tiller.

Wife.—There's a kind gentleman, I warrant you. When will you do as much for me, George?

Luce.—Beshrew me, sir, I'm sorry for your losses,
But, as the proverb says, I cannot cry;
I would you had not seen me.

Hum.— So would I,
Unless you had more maw to do me good.

Luce.—Why cannot this strange passion be withstood?
Send for a constable, and raise the town.

Hum.—Oh, no; my valiant love will batter down
Millions of constables, and put to flight
E'en that great watch of Midsummer Day at night.

Luce.—Beshrew me, sir, 'twere good I yielded, then;
Weak women cannot hope, where valiant men
Have no resistance.

Hum.— Yield then; I am full
Of pity, though I say it, and can pull
Out of my pocket thus a pair of gloves.
Look, Luce, look, the dog's tooth, nor the doves
Are not so white as these; and sweet they be,
And whipt about with silk, as you may see.
If you desire the price, shoot from your eye

A beam to this place, and you shall espy
F. S., which is to say, my sweetest honey,
They cost me three-and-twopence, and no money.

Luce.—Well, sir, I take them kindly, and I thank you; what,
What would you more?

Hum.— Nothing.

Luce.— Why, then, farewell.

Hum.—Nor so, nor so, for, lady, I must tell,
Before we part, for what we met together,
God grant me time, and patience, and fair weather.

Luce.—Speak and declare your mind in terms so brief.

Hum.—I shall; then first and foremost, for relief
I call to you, if that you can afford it,
I care not at what price, for on my word it
Shall be repaid again, although it cost me
More than I'll speak of now, for love hath tossed me
In furious blanket like a tennis-ball,
And now I rise aloft, and now I fall.

Luce.—Alas, good gentleman, alas the day!

Hum.—I thank you heartily, and as I say,
Thus do I still continue without rest,
I' th' morning like a man, at night a beast,
Roaring and bellowing mine own disquiet,
That much I fear, forsaking of my diet,
Will bring me presently to that quandary,
I shall bid all adieu.

Luce.— Now, by St. Mary,
That were great pity.

Hum.— So it were, beshrew me.
Then ease me, lusty Luce, and pity show me.

Luce.—Why, sir, you know my will is nothing worth
Without my father's grant; get his consent,
And then you may with full assurance try me.

Hum.—The worshipful your sire will not deny me,
For I have ask'd him, and he hath replied,
Sweet Master Humphrey, Luce shall be thy bride.

Lucc.—Sweet Master Humphrey, then I am content.

Hum.—And so am I, in truth.

Luce.— Yet take me with you.

There is another clause must be annexed,
And this it is I swore, and will perform it,
No man shall ever joy me as his wife,
But he that stole me hence. If you dare venture,
I'm yours; you need not fear, my father loves you;
If not, farewell forever.

Hum.— Stay, nymph, stay!

I have a double gelding, color'd bay,
Sprung by his father from Barbarian kind,
Another for myself, though somewhat blind,
Yet true as trusty tree.

Luce.— I'm satisfied,
And so I give my hand; our course must lie
Through Waltham Forest, where I have a friend
Will entertain us; so farewell, Sir Humphrey,
And think upon your business. (Exit Luce.)

Hum.— Though I die,
I am resolv'd to venture life and limb
For one so young, so fair, so kind, so trim.
(Exit Humphrey.)

Wife.—By my faith and troth, George, and as I am virtuous, it is e'en the kindest young man that ever trod on shoe-leather; well, go thy ways, if thou hast her not, 'tis not thy fault, i'faith.

Cit.—I prithee, mouse, be patient; a shall have her, or I'll make some of 'em smoke for't.

Wife.—That's my good lamb, George; fie, this stinking tobacco kills me; would there were none in England. Now I pray, gentlemen, what good does this stinking tobacco do you? Nothing; I warrant you make chimneys o' your faces. Oh, husband, husband, now, now there's Ralph, there's Ralph!

Enter Ralph, like a grocer in his shop, with two prentices, reading "Palmerin of England."

Cit.—Peace, fool, let Ralph alone; hark you, Ralph, do not strain yourself too much at the first. Peace, begin, Ralph.

Ralph.—Then Palmerin and Trineus, snatching their lances from their dwarfs, and clasping their helmets, galloped amain after the giant, and Palmerin having gotten a sight of him, came posting amain, saying, "Stay, traitorous thief, for thou mayst not so carry away her that is worth the greatest lord in the world;" and, with these words, gave him a blow on the shoulder, that he struck him beside his elephant; and Trineus coming to the knight that had Agricola behind him, set him soon beside his horse, with his neck broken in the fall, so that the princess, getting out of the throng, between joy and grief said, "All happy knight, the mirror of all such as follow arms, now may I be well assured of the love thou bearest me." I wonder why the kings do not raise an army of fourteen or fifteen hundred thousand men, as big as the army that the Prince of Portigo brought against Rosicler, and destroy these giants; they do much hurt to wandering damsels that go in quest of their knights.

Wife.—Faith, husband, and Ralph says true, for they say the King of Portugal cannot sit at his meat but the giants and the ettins will come and snatch it from him.

Cit.—Hold thy tongue; on, Ralph.

Ralph.—And certainly those knights are much to be commended who, neglecting their possessions, wander with a squire and a dwarf through the deserts to relieve poor ladies.

Wife.—Ay, by my faith are they, Ralph, let 'em say what they will, they are indeed; our knights neglect their possessions well enough, but they do not the rest.

Ralph.—There are no such courteous and fair well-spoken knights in this age; they will call one the son of a sea-cook that Palmerin of England would have called fair sir; and one that Rosicler would have called right beautiful damsel they will call old witch.

Wife.—I'll be sworn will they, Ralph; they have called me so an hundred times about a scurvy pipe of tobacco.

Ralph.—But what brave spirit could be content to sit in his shop, with a flapet of wood, and a blue apron before him, selling Methridatam and Dragons' Water to visited houses, that might pursue feats of arms, and through his noble achieve-

ments procure such a famous history to be written of his heroic prowess?

Cit.—Well said, Ralph; some more of those words, Ralph.

Wife.—They go finely, by my troth.

Ralph.—Why should I not, then, pursue this course, both for the credit of myself and our company? For among all the worthy books of achievements, I do not call to mind that I yet read of a grocer errant: I will be the said knight. Have you heard of any that hath wandered unfurnished of his squire and dwarf? My elder prentice Tim shall be my trusty squire, and little George my dwarf. Hence, my blue apron! Yet, in remembrance of my former trade, upon my shield shall be portrayed a burning pestle, and I will be called the Knight of the Burning Pestle.

Wife.—Nay, I dare swear thou wilt not forget thy old trade; thou wert ever meek. Ralph! Tim!

Tim.—Anon.

Ralph.—My beloved squire, and George, my dwarf, I charge you that from henceforth you never call me by any other name but the Right courteous and valiant Knight of the Burning Pestle; and that you never call any female by the name of a woman or wench, but fair lady, if she have her desires; if not, distressed damsel; that you call all forests and heaths, deserts; and all horses, palfreys.

Wife.—This is very fine: faith, do the gentlemen like Ralph, think you, husband?

Cit.—Ay, I warrant thee, the players would give all the shoes in their shop for him.

Ralph.—My beloved Squire Tim, stand out. Admit this were a desert, and over it a knight-errant pricking, and I should bid you inquire of his intents, what would you say?

Tim.—Sir, my master sent me to know whither you are riding?

Ralph.—No, thus: Fair sir, the Right courteous and valiant Knight of the Burning Pestle commanded me to inquire upon what adventure you are bound, whether to relieve some distressed damsel or otherwise.

Cit.—Dunder blockhead cannot remember.

Wife.—I'faith, and Ralph told him on't before; all the gentlemen heard him; did he not, gentlemen, did not Ralph tell him on't?

George.—Right courteous and valiant Knight of the Burning Pestle, here is a distressed damsel to have a halfpenny-worth of pepper.

Wife.—That's a good boy, see, the little boy can hit it; by my troth it's a fine child.

Ralph.—Relieve her with all courteous language; now shut up shop: no more my prentice, but my trusty squire and dwarf, I must bespeak my shield and arming pestle.

Cit.—Go thy ways, Ralph, as I am a true man, thou art the best on 'em all.

Wife.—Ralph! Ralph!

Ralph.—What say you, mistress?

Wife.—I prithee come again quickly, sweet Ralph.

Ralph.—By and by. (Exit Ralph.)

Enter Jasper and his mother, Mistress Merry-thought.

Mistress Merry-thought.—Give thee my blessing? No, I'll never give thee my blessing, I'll see thee hang'd first; it shall ne'er be said I gave thee my blessing. Thou art thy father's own son, of the blood of the Merry-thoughts; I may curse the time that e'er I knew thy father; he hath spent all his own, and mine too, and when I tell him of it, he laughs and dances and sings, and cries "A merry heart lives long-a." And thou art a wast-thrift, and art run away from thy master, that lov'd thee well, and art come to me, and I have laid up a little for my younger son Michael, and thou thinkest to bezele that, but thou shalt never be able to do it. Come hither, Michael, come, Michael, down on thy knees, thou shalt have my blessing.

Enter Michael.

Michael.—I pray you, mother, pray to God to bless me.

Mist. Mer.—God bless thee; but Jasper shall never have my blessing; he shall be hang'd first, shall he not, Michael? How sayest thou?

Mich.—Yes, forsooth, mother, and grace of God.

Mist. Mer.—That's a good boy.

Wife.—I'faith, it's a fine-spoken child.

Jasper.—Mother, though you forget a parent's love,

I must preserve the duty of a child.

I ran not from my master, nor return

To have your stock maintain my idleness.

Wife.—Ungracious child I warrant him; hark how he chops logic with his mother; thou hadst best tell her she lies, do, tell her she lies.

Cit.—If he were my son, I would hang him up by the heels, and flea him, and salt him, humpty halter-sack.

Jasp.—My coming only is to beg your love,

Which I must ever, though I never gain it;

And howsoever you esteem of me,

There is no drop of blood hid in these veins,

But I remember well belongs to you,

That brought me forth, and would be glad for you

To rip them all again, and let it out.

Mist. Mer.—I'faith I had sorrow enough for thee, God knows; but I'll hamper thee well enough: get thee in, thou vagabond, get thee in, and learn of thy brother Michael.

Old Merry-thought.—(Within.) “Nose, nose, jolly red nose,
And who gave thee this jolly red nose?”

Mist. Mer.—Hark, my husband he's singing and hoiting,
And I'm fain to cark and care, and all little enough.
Husband, Charles, Charles Merry-thought!

Enter Old Merry-thought.

Old Mer.—“Nutmegs and ginger, cinnamon and cloves,
And they gave me this jolly red nose.”

Mist. Mer.—If you would consider your estate, you would have little list to sing, I wis.

Old Mer.—It should never be considered, while it were an estate, if I thought it would spoil my singing.

Mist. Mer.—But how wilt thou do, Charles? Thou art an old man, and thou canst not work, and thou hast not forty

shillings left, and thou eatest good meat, and drinkest good drink, and laughest?

Old Mer.—And will do.

Mist. Mer.—But how wilt thou come by it, Charles?

Old Mer.—How? Why, how have I done hitherto these forty years? I never came into my dining-room, but at eleven and six o'clock I found excellent meat and drink o' th' table. My clothes were never worn out, but the next morning a tailor brought me a new suit, and without question it will be so ever! Use makes perfectness; if all should fail, it is but a little straining myself extraordinary, and laugh myself to death.

Wife.—It's a foolish old man, this: is not he, George?

Cit.—Yes, honey.

Wife.—Give me a penny i' th' purse while I live, George.

Cit.—Ay, by'r lady, honey, hold thee there.

Mist. Mer.—Well, Charles, you promised to provide for Jasper, and I have laid up for Michael. I pray you pay Jasper his portion; he's come home, and he shall not consume Michael's stock; he says his master turned him away, but I promise you truly, I think he ran away.

Wife.—No, indeed, Mistress Merry-thought, though he be a notable gallows, yet I'll assure you his master did turn him away, even in this place, 'twas i'faith within this half hour, about his daughter; my husband was by.

Cit.—Hang him, rogue, he served him well enough: love his master's daughter! By my troth, honey, if there were a thousand boys, thou wouldst spoil them all, with taking their parts; let his mother alone with him.

Wife.—Ay, George, but yet truth is truth.

Old Mer.—Where is Jasper? He's welcome, however, call him in, he shall have his portion; is he merry?

Mist. Mer.—Ay, foul chive him, he is too merry. Jasper! Michael!

Enter Jasper and Michael.

Old Mer.—Welcomē, Jasper, though thou runn'st away, welcome! God bless thee! It is thy mother's mind thou shouldst receive thy portion; thou hast been abroad, and I

hope hast learned experience enough to govern it. Thou art of sufficient years. Hold thy hand: one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, there is ten shillings for thee; thrust thyself into the world with that, and take some settled course. If fortune cross thee, thou hast a retiring place; come home to me, I have twenty shillings left. Be a good husband—that is, wear ordinary clothes, eat the best meat, and drink the best drink; be merry, and give to the poor, and believe me, thou hast no end of thy goods.

Jasper.—Long may you live free from all thought of ill,
And long have cause to be thus merry still.
But, father——

Old Mer.—No more words, Jasper; get thee gone, thou hast my blessing, thy father's spirit upon thee. Farewell, Jasper.

“But yet, or e'er you part (oh, cruel),
Kiss me, kiss me, sweeting,
Mine own dear jewel.”

So, now begone; no words. (Exit Jasper.)

Mist. Mer.—So, Michael, now get thee gone, too.

Michael.—Yes, forsooth, mother, but I'll have my father's blessing first.

Mist. Mer.—No, Michael, 'tis no matter for his blessing; thou hast my blessing. Begone; I'll fetch my money and jewels and follow thee: I'll stay no longer with him, I warrant thee. Truly, Charles, I'll be gone, too.

Old Mer.—What? You will not.

Mist. Mer.—Yes, indeed, will I.

Old Mer.—“Heyho, farewell, Nan,

I'll never trust wench more again, if I can.”

Mist. Mer.—You shall not think, when all your own is gone, to spend that I have been scraping up for Michael.

Old Mer.—Farewell, good wife, I expect it not; all I have to do in this world is to be merry; which I shall, if the ground be not taken from me; and if it be,

“When earth and seas from me are reft,
The skies aloft for me are left.” (Exeunt.)

(Boy dances. Music.)

Wife.—I'll be sworn he's a merry old gentleman for all that. Hark, hark, husband, hark, fiddles, fiddles; now surely they go finely. They say 'tis present death for these fiddlers to tune their rebecks before the great Turk's grace, is't not, George? But look, look, here's a youth dances; now, good youth, do a turn o' the toe. Sweetheart, i'faith, I'll have Ralph come and do some of his gambols: he'll ride the wild mare, gentlemen, 'twould do your hearts good to see him: I thank you, kind youth, pray bid Ralph come.

Cit.—Peace, conie. Sirrah, you scurvy boy, bid the players send Ralph, or an' they do not, I'll tear some of their periwigs beside their heads; this is all riff-raff.

ACT II. SCENE I.

Enter Merchant and Humphrey.

Merchant.—And how, faith, how goes it now, son Humphrey?

Humphrey.—Right worshipful and my beloved friend,
And father dear, this matter's at an end.

Merch.—'Tis well, it should be so, I'm glad the girl
Is found so tractable.

Hum.— Nay, she must whirl
From hence (and you must wink: for so I say,
The story tells), to-morrow before day.

Wife.—George, dost thou think in thy conscience now 'twill be a match? Tell me but what thou thinkest, sweet rogue; thou seest the poor gentleman (dear heart) how it labors and throbs, I warrant you, to be at rest: I'll go move the father for't.

Cit.—No, no, I prithee sit still, honeysuckle, thou'lt spoil all; if he deny him, I'll bring half a dozen good fellows myself, and in the shutting of an evening knock it up, and there's an end.

Wife.—I'll buss thee for that, i'faith, boy; well, George, well, you have been a wag in your days, I warrant you; but God forgive you, and I do with all my heart.

Merch.—How was it, son? You told me that to-morrow before daybreak, you must convey her hence.

Hum.—I must, I must, and thus it is agreed,
 Your daughter rides upon a brown bay steed,
 I on a sorrel, which I bought of Brian,
 The honest host of the Red Roaring Lion,
 In Waltham situate: then, if you may,
 Consent in seemly sort, lest by delay,
 The fatal sisters come, and do the office,
 And then you'll sing another song.

Merch.—

Alas!

Why should you be thus full of grief to me,
 That do as willing as yourself agree
 To anything, so it be good and fair?
 Then steal her when you will, if such a pleasure
 Content you both; I'll sleep and never see it,
 To make your joys more full: but tell me why
 You may not here perform your marriage?

Wife.—God's blessing o' thy soul, old man, i'faith thou art
 loth to part true hearts: I see a has her, George, and I'm glad
 on't; well, go thy ways, Humphrey, for a fair-spoken man. I
 believe thou hast not a fellow within the walls of London; an'
 I should say the suburbs too, I should not lie. Why dost not
 thou rejoice with me, George?

Cit.—If I could but see Ralph again, I were as merry as
 mine host, i'faith.

Hum.—The cause you seem to ask, I thus declare;
 Help me, O muses nine: your daughter sware
 A foolish oath, the more it was the pity:
 Yet no one but myself within this city
 Shall dare to say so, but a bold defiance
 Shall meet him, were he of the noble science.
 And yet she sware, and yet why did she swear?
 Truly I cannot tell, unless it were
 For her own ease; for sure sometimes an oath,
 Being sworn thereafter, is like cordial broth:
 And this it was she swore, never to marry,
 But such a one whose mighty arm could carry
 (As meaning me, for I am such a one)
 Her bodily away through stick and stone,
 Till both of us arrive, at her request,
 Some ten miles off in the wide Waltham Forest.

Merch.—If this be all, you shall not need to fear
Any denial in your love; proceed,
I'll neither follow nor repent the deed.

Hum.—Good-night, twenty good-nights, and twenty more,
And twenty more good-nights: that makes threescore.
(*Exeunt.*)

Enter Mistress Merry-thought and her son Michael.

Mist. Mer.—Come, Michael, art thou not weary, boy?

Michael.—No, forsooth, mother, not I.

Mist. Mer.—Where be we now, child?

Mich.—Indeed, forsooth, mother, I cannot tell, unless we be
at Mile End. Is not all the world Mile End, mother?

Mist. Mer.—No, Michael, not all the world, boy; but I can
assure thee, Michael, Mile End is a goodly matter. There has
been a pitched field, my child, between the naughty Spaniels
and the Englishmen; and the Spaniels ran away, Michael, and
the Englishmen followed. My neighbor Coxstone was there,
boy, and killed them all with a birding-piece.

Mich.—Mother, forsooth.

Mist. Mer.—What says my white boy?

Mich.—Shall not my father go with us, too?

Mist. Mer.—No, Michael, let thy father go snick-up; he
shall never come between a pair of sheets with me again while
he lives: let him stay at home and sing for his supper, boy.
Come, child, sit down, and I'll show my boy fine knacks in-
deed; look here, Michael, here's a ring, and here's a brooch,
and here's a bracelet, and here's two rings more, and here's
money, and gold by th' eye, my boy.

Mich.—Shall I have all this, mother?

Mist. Mer.—Ay, Michael, thou shalt have all, Michael.

Cit.—How lik'st thou this, wench?

Wife.—I cannot tell, I would have Ralph, George; I'll see
no more else, indeed, la: and I pray you let the youths under-
stand so much by word of mouth, for I will tell you truly, I'm
afraid o' my boy. Come, come, George, let's be merry and wise;
the child's a fatherless child, and say they should put him into

a strait pair of gaskins, 'twere worse than knot-grass, he would never grow after it.

Enter Ralph, Squire and Dwarf.

Cit.—Here's Ralph, here's Ralph.

Wife.—How do you, Ralph? You are welcome, Ralph, as I may say, it's a good boy, hold up thy head, and be not afraid, we are thy friends, Ralph. The gentlemen will praise thee, Ralph, if thou play'st thy part with audacity; begin, Ralph, a God's name.

Ralph.—My trusty squire, unlace my helm, give me my hat; where are we, or what desert might this be?

Dwarf.—Mirror of knighthood, this is, as I take it, the perilous Waltham down, in whose bottom stands the enchanted valley.

Mist. Mer.—Oh, Michael, we are betrayed, we are betrayed; here be giants; fly, boy; fly, boy; fly!

(Exeunt Mother and Michael.)

Ralph.—Lace on my helm again; what noise is this?

A gentle lady flying the embrace

Of some uncourteous knight; I will relieve her.

Go, squire, and say, the knight that wears this pestle

In honor of all ladies, swears revenge

Upon that recreant coward that pursues her;

Go, comfort her, and that same gentle squire

That bears her company.

Squire.—

I go, brave knight.

Ralph. My trusty dwarf and friend, reach me my shield.

And hold it while I swear, first by my knighthood,

Then by the soul of Amadis de Gaul,

My famous ancestor, then by my sword,

The beauteous Brionella girt about me,

By this bright burning pestle, of mine honor

The living trophy, and by all respect

Due to distressed damsels, here I vow

Never to end the quest of this fair lady,

And that forsaken squire, till by my valor

I gain their liberty.

Dicarf.—

Heaven bless the knight

That thus relieves poor errant gentlewomen. (Exit.)

Wife.—Ay, marry, Ralph, this has some savor in it; I would see the proudest of them all offer to carry his books after him. But, George, I will not have him go away so soon, I shall be sick if he go away, that I shall; call Ralph again, George, call Ralph again: I prithee, sweetheart, let him come fight before me, and let's have some drums and trumpets, and let him kill all that comes near him, an' thou lov'st me, George.

Cit.—Peace, a little, bird; he shall kill them all, an' they were twenty more on 'em than there are.

Enter Jasper.

Jasper.—Now, Fortune (if thou be'st not only ill),
Show me thy better face, and bring about
Thy desperate wheel, that I may climb at length
And stand; this is our place of meeting,
Iw love have any constancy. Oh, age
Where only wealthy men are counted happy:
How shall I please thee? how deserve thy smiles,
When I am only rich in misery?
My father's blessing, and this little coin
Is my inheritance. A strong revenue!
From earth thou art, and unto earth I give thee.
There grow and multiply, whilst fresher air
Breeds me a fresher fortune. How, illusion

(Spies the casket.)

What, hath the devil coined himself before me?
'Tis metal good, it rings well, I am waking,
And taking, too, I hope; now God's dear blessing
Upon his heart that left it here, 'tis mine;
These pearls, I take it, were not left for swine. (Exit.)

Wife.—I do not like this unthrifty youth should embezzle away the money; the poor gentlewoman, his mother, will have a heavy heart for it, God knows.

Cit.—And reason good, sweetheart.

Wife.—But let him go; I'll tell Ralph a tale in's ear, shall fetch him again with a wanion, I warrant him, if he be above

ground; and besides, George, here be a number of sufficient gentlemen can witness, and myself, and yourself, and the musicians, if we be called in question; but here comes Ralph, George; thou shalt hear him speak, as he were an Emperal.

Enter Ralph and Dwarf.

Ralph.—Comes not Sir Squire again?

Dwarf.—Right courteous knight,

Your squire doth come, and with him comes the lady
Fair, and the squire of damsels, as I take it.

Enter Mistress Merry-thought, Michael and Squire.

Ralph.—Madam, if any service or devoir

Of a poor errant knight may right your wrongs,
Command it. I am pressed to give you succor,
For to that holy end I bear my armor.

Mistress Merry-thought.—Alas, sir, I am a poor gentlewoman, and I have lost my money in this forest.

Ralph.—Desert, you would say, lady, and not lost
Whilst I have sword and lance; dry up your tears,
Which ill befit the beauty of that face,
And tell the story, if I may request it,
Of your disastrous fortune.

Mist. Mer.—Out alas, I left a thousand pound, a thousand pound, e'en all the money I had laid up for this youth, upon the sight of your mastership. You looked so grim, and as I may say it, saving your presence, more like a giant than a mortal man.

Ralph.—I am as you are, lady, so are they
All mortal; but why weeps this gentle squire?

Mist. Mer.—Has he not cause to weep, do you think, when he has lost his inheritance?

Ralph.—Young hope of valor, weep not; I am here
That will confound thy foe, and pay it dear
Upon his coward head, that dare deny
Distresséd squires and ladies equity.
I have but one horse, upon which shall ride
This lady fair behind me, and before

This courteous squire; fortune will give us more
 Upon our next adventure; fairly speed
 Beside us, squire and dwarf, to do us need. (Exeunt.)

Cit.—Did not I tell you, Nell, what your man would do?
 By the faith of my body, wench, for clean action and good delivery, they may all cast their caps at him.

Wife.—And so they may, i'faith, for I dare speak it boldly, the twelve companies of London cannot match him, timber for timber. Well, George, an' he be not inveigled by some of these paltry players, I ha' much marvel; but, George, we ha' done our parts, if the boy have any grace to be thankful.

Cit.—Yes, I warrant you, duckling.

Enter Humphrey and Luce.

Humphrey.—Good Mistress Luce, however I in fault am
 For your lame horse, you're welcome unto Waltham!
 But which way now to go, or what to say,
 I know not, truly, till it be broad day.

Luce.—Oh, fear not, Master Humphrey, I am guide
 For this place good enough.

Hum.— Then up and ride,
 Or if it please you, walk for your repose,
 Or sit, or if you will, go pluck a rose:
 Either of which shall be indifferent
 To your good friend and Humphrey, whose consent
 Is so entangled ever to your will,
 As the poor harmless horse is to the mill.

Luce.—Faith, and you say the word, we'll e'en sit down,
 And take a nap.

Hum.— 'Tis better in the town,
 Where we may nap together; for, believe me,
 To sleep without a match would mickle grieve me.

Luce.—You're merry, Master Humphrey.

Hum.— So I am,
 And have been ever merry from my dam.

Luce.—Your nurse had the less labor.

Hum.— Faith, it may be,
 Unless it were by chance I did bewray me.

Enter Jasper.

Jasper.—Luce, dear friend Luce!

Luce.— Here, Jasper.

Jasp.— You are mine.

Hum.—If it be so, my friend, you use me fine:

What do you think I am?

Jasp.— An arrant noddy.

Hum.—A word of obloquy; now, by my body,

I'll tell thy master, for I know thee well.

Jasp.—Nay, an' you be so forward for to tell,

Take that, and that, and tell him, sir, I gave it:

(Beats him.)

And say I paid you well.

Hum.— Oh, sir, I have it,

And do confess the payment; pray be quiet.

Jasp.—Go, get you to your night-cap and the diet,

To cure your beaten bones.

Luce.— Alas, poor Humphrey,

Get thee some wholesome broth with sage and cumfry:

A little oil of roses, and a feather

To 'noint thy back withal.

Hum.— When I came hither,

Would I had gone to Paris with John Dory.

Luce.—Farewell, my pretty numps; I'm very sorry

I cannot bear thee company.

Hum.— Farewell.

The devil's dam was ne'er so bang'd in hell. (Exeunt.)

Manet Humphrey.

Wife.—This young Jasper will prove me another things, a my conscience, and he may be suffered; George, dost not see, George, how a swaggers, and flies at the very heads a folks as he were a dragon; well, if I do not do his lesson for wronging the poor gentleman, I am no true woman; his friends that brought him up might have been better occupied, I wis, than have taught him these fegaries: he's e'en in the highway to the gallows, God bless him.

Cit.—You're too bitter, cony; the young man may do well enough for all this.

Wife.—Come hither, Master Humphrey; has he hurt you? Now, beshrew his fingers for't; here, sweetheart, here's some green ginger for thee; now, beshrew my heart, but a has peppernel in's head as big as a pullet's egg; alas, sweet lamb, how thy temples beat; take the peace on him, sweetheart, take the peace on him.

Enter a Boy.

Cit.—No, no, you talk like a foolish woman; I'll ha Ralph fight with him, and swinge him up well-favor'dly. Sirrah, boy, come hither; let Ralph come in and fight with Jasper.

Wife.—Ay, and beat him well, he's an unhappy boy.

Boy.—Sir, you must pardon us; the plot of our play lies contrary, and 'twill hazard the spoiling of our play.

Cit.—Plot me no plots, I'll ha' Ralph come out; I'll make your house too hot for you else.

Boy.—Why, sir, he shall; but if anything fall out of order, the gentlemen must pardon us.

Cit.—Go your ways, Goodman boy, I'll hold him a penny he shall have his belly full of fighting now. Ho, here comes Ralph; no more.

Enter Ralph, Mistress Merry-thought, Michael, Squire and Dwarf.

Ralph.—What knight is that, squire? Ask him if he keep
The passage bound by love of lady fair,
Or else but prickant.

Hum.— Sir, I am no knight,
But a poor gentleman, that this same night,
Had stolen from me, upon yonder green,
My lovely wife, and suffered (to be seen
Yet extant on my shoulders) such a greeting,
That whilst I live, I shall think of that meeting.

Wife.—Ay, Ralph, he beat him unmercifully, Ralph, an' thou spar'st him, Ralph, I would thou wert hang'd.

Cit.—No more, wife, no more.

Ralph.—Where is the caitiff wretch hath done this deed?
Lady, your pardon, that I may proceed
Upon the quest of this injurious knight.
And thou, fair squire, repute me not the worse,
In leaving the great 'venture of the purse
And the rich casket, till some better leisure.

Enter Jasper and Luce.

Hum.—Here comes the broker hath purloined my treasure.

Ralph.—Go, squire, and tell him I am here,
An errant knight at arms, to crave delivery
Of that fair lady to her own knight's arms.
If he deny, bid him take choice of ground,
And so defy him.

Squire.— From the knight that bears
The golden pestle, I defy thee, knight,
Unless thou make fair restitution
Of that bright lady.

Jasper.— Tell the knight that sent thee
He is an ass, and I will keep the wench,
And knock his head-piece.

Ralph.—Knight, thou art but dead,
If thou recall not thy uncourteous terms.

Wife.—Break his pate, Ralph; break his pate, Ralph,
soundly.

Jasp.—Come, knight, I'm ready for you; now your pestle
(Snatches away his pestle.)

Shall try what temper, sir, your mortar's of;
With that he stood upright in his stirrups,
And gave the knight of the calves'-skin such a knock
That he forsook his horse, and down he fell,
And then he leaped upon him, and plucking off his helmet—

Hum.—Nay, an' my noble knight be down so soon,
Though I can scarcely go, I needs must run—

(Exit Humphrey and Ralph.)

Wife.—Run, Ralph; run, Ralph; run for thy life, boy; Jasper comes, Jasper comes!

Jasp.—Come, Luce, we must have other arms for you.

Humphrey and Golden Pestle, both adieu. (Exeunt.)

Wife.—Sure the devil, God bless us, is in this springald; why, George, didst ever see such a fire-drake? I am afraid my boy's miscarried; if he be, though he were Master Merry-thought's son a thousand times, if there be any law in England, I'll make some of them smart for't.

Cit.—No, no; I have found out the matter, sweetheart. Jasper is enchanted, as sure as we are here, he is enchanted; he could no more have stood in Ralph's hands than I can stand in my lord mayor's; I'll have a ring to discover all enchantments, and Ralph shall beat him yet. Be no more vexed, for it shall be so.

Enter Ralph, Squire, Dwarf, Mistress Merry-thought and Michael.

Wife.—Oh, husband, here's Ralph again; stay, Ralph, let me speak with thee; how dost thou, Ralph? Art thou not shrewdly hurt? The foul great lunges laid unmercifully on thee! There's some sugar-candy for thee; proceed, thou shalt have another bout with him.

Cit.—If Ralph had him at the fencing-school, if he did not make a puppy of him, and drive him up and down the school, he should ne'er come in my shop more.

Mistress Merry-thought.—Truly, Master Knight of the Burning Pestle, I am weary.

Michael.—Indeed la, mother, and I'm very hungry.

Ralph.—Take comfort, gentle dame, and your fair squire.

For in this desert there must needs be placed
Many strong castles, held by courteous knights,
And till I bring you safe to one of those,
I swear by this my order ne'er to leave you.

Wife.—Well said, Ralph: George, Ralph was ever comfortable, was he not?

Cit.—Yes, duck.

Wife.—I shall ne'er forget him. When we had lost our child, you know it was strayed almost alone to Puddle Wharf, and the criers were abroad for it, and there it had drowned

itself but for a sculler, Ralph was the most comfortablest to me: "Peace, mistress," says he, "let it go; I'll get you another as good." Did he not, George? Did he not say so?

Cit.—Yes, indeed did he, mouse.

Dwarf.—I would we had a mess of pottage and a pot of drink, squire, and were going to bed.

Squire.—w^{ny}, we are at Waltham town's end, and that's the Bell Inn.

Dwarf.—Take courage, valiant knight, damsel and squire,
I have discovered, not a stone's cast off,
An ancient castle held by the old knight
Of the most holy order of the Bell,
Who gives to all knights errant entertain;
There plenty is of food, and all prepar'd
By the white hands of his own lady dear.
He hath three squires that welcome all his guests:
The first, high Chamberlino, who will see
Our beds prepared, and bring us snowy sheets;
The second hight Tapstero, who will see
Our pots full filléd, and no froth therein;
The third, a gentle squire Ostlero hight,
Who will our palfreys slick with wisps of straw,
And in the manger put them oats enough,
And never grease their teeth with candle-snuff.

Wife.—That same dwarf's a pretty boy, but the squire's a grout-nold.

Ralph.—Knock at the gates, my squire, with stately lance.

Enter Tapster.

Tapster.—Who's there, you're welcome, gentlemen; will you see a room?

Dwarf.—Right courteous and valiant Knight of the Burning Pestle, this is the squire Tapstero.

Ralph.—Fair squire Tapstero, I, a wandering knight,
Hight of the Burning Pestle, in the quest
Of this fair lady's casket and wrought purse,
Losing myself in this vast wilderness,
Am to this castle well by fortune brought,

Where, hearing of the goodly entertain
Your knight of holy order of the Bell
Gives to all damsels, and all errant knights,
I thought to knock, and now am bold to enter.

Tap.—An't please you see a chamber, you are very welcome. (Exeunt.)

Wife.—George, I would have something done, and I cannot tell what it is.

Cit.—What is it, Nell?

Wife.—Why, George, shall Ralph beat nobody again? Prithce, sweetheart, let him.

Cit.—So he shall, Nell, and if I join with him, we'll knock them all.

Enter Humphrey and Merchant.

Wife.—Oh, George, here's Master Humphrey again, now, that lost Mistress Luce, and Mistress Luce's father. Master Humphrey will do somebody's errand, I warrant him.

Humphrey.—Father, it's true in arms I ne'er shall clasp her,
For she is stol'n away by your man Jasper.

Wife.—I thought he would tell him.

Merchant.—Unhappy that I am to lose my child:
Now I begin to think on Jasper's words,
Who oft hath urg'd to me thy foolishness;
Why didst thou let her go? Thou lov'st her not,
That wouldst bring home thy life, and not bring her.

Hum.—Father, forgive me, I shall tell you true,
Look on my shoulders, they are black and blue;
Whilst to and fro fair Luce and I were winding,
He came and basted me with a hedge binding.

Merch.—Get men and horses straight, we will be there
Within this hour; you know the place again?

Hum.—I know the place where he my loins did swaddle,
I'll get six horses, and to each a saddle.

Merch.—Meantime I will go talk with Jasper's father.

(Exeunt.)

Wife.—George, what wilt thou lay with me now, that Master Humphrey has not Mistress Luce yet? Speak, George, what wilt thou lay with me?

Cit.—No, Nell, I warrant thee, Jasper is at Puckeridge with her by this.

Wife.—Nay, George, you must consider Mistress Luce's feet are tender, and besides, 'tis dark, and I promise you truly, I do not see how he should get out of Waltham Forest with her yet.

Cit.—Nay, honey, what wilt thou lay with me that Ralph has her not yet?

Wife.—I will not lay against Ralph, honey, because I have not spoken with him: but look, George, peace, here comes the merry old gentleman again.

Enter Old Merry-thought.

Old Merry-thought.—"When it was grown to dark midnight,
And all were fast asleep,
In came Margaret's grimly ghost,
And stood at William's feet."

I have money and meat and drink beforehand till to-morrow at noon; why should I be sad? Methinks I have half a dozen jovial spirits within me, "I am three merry men, and three merry men." To what end should any man be sad in this world? Give me a man that when he goes to hanging cries, "Troul the black bowl to me;" and a woman that will sing a catch in her travail. I have seen a man come by my door with a serious face, in a black cloak, without a hatband, carrying his head as if he looked for pins in the street. I have looked out of my window half a year after, and have spied that man's head upon London Bridge. 'Tis vile! Never trust a tailor that does not sing at his work; his mind is of nothing but filching.

Wife.—Mark this, George, 'tis worth noting: Godfrey, my tailor, you know, never sings, and he had fourteen yards to make this gown: and I'll be sworn, Mistress Penistone, the draper's wife, had one made with twelve.

Old Mer.—" 'Tis mirth that fills the veins with blood,
More than wine, or sleep, or food;
Let each man keep his heart at ease,
No man dies of that disease!
He that would his body keep
From diseases, must not weep;

But whoever laughs and sings,
 Never he his body brings
 Into fevers, gouts or rheums,
 Or ling'ringly his lungs consumes;
 Or meets with achés in the bone,
 Or catarrhs, or griping stone:
 But contented lives by aye,
 The more he laughs, the more he *may*."

Wife.—Look, George. How say'st thou by this, George?
 Is't not a fine old man? Now, God's blessing a thy sweet lips.
 When wilt thou be so merry, George? Faith, thou art the
 frowningest little thing, when thou art angry, in a country.

Enter Merchant.

Cit.—Peace, cony; thou shalt see him look down, too, I
 warrant thee. Here's Luce's father come now.

Old Mer.—"As you came from Walsingham,
 From the Holy Land,
 There met you not with my true love
 By the way as you came?"

Merchant.—Oh, Master Merry-thought! my daughter's gone!
 This mirth becomes you not, my daughter's gone!

Old Mer.—"Why, an' if she be, what care I?
 Or let her come home, or go, or tarry?"

Merch.—Mock not my misery, it is your son
 (Whom I have made my own, when all forsook him)
 Has stol'n my only joy, my child, away.

Old Mer.—"He set her on a milk-white steed,
 And himself upon a gray;
 He never turned his face again,
 But he bore her quite away."

Merch.—Unworthy of the kindness I have shown
 To thee and thine; too late, I well perceive
 Thou art consenting to my daughter's loss.

Old Mer.—Your daughter? What a stir's here wi' y'r
 daughter? Let her go, think no more on her, but sing loud.
 If both my sons were on the gallows I would sing,

"Down, down, down: they fall
 Down, and arise they never shall."

Merch.—Oh, might but I behold her once again,
And she once more embrace her aged sire.

Old Mer.—Fie, how scurvily this goes:

“And she once more embrace her aged sire!”

You'll make a dog on her, will ye? She cares much for her aged sire, I warrant you.

“She cares not for her daddy, nor
She cares not for her mammy,
For she is, she is, she is my
Lord of Low-gaves lassie.”

Merch.—For this thy scorn I will pursue
That son of thine to death.

Old Mer.—Do; and when you ha' killed him,
“Give him flowers enow, Palmer, give him flowers enow,
Give him red and white, blue, green and yellow.”

Merch.—I'll fetch my daughter.

Old Mer.—I'll hear no more o' your daughter; it spoils my mirth.

Merch.—I say I'll fetch my daughter.

Old Mer.—“Was never man for lady's sake, down, down,
Tormented as I, Sir Guy? de derry down,
For Lucy's sake, that lady bright, down, down,
As ever man beheld with eye? de derry down.”

Merch.—I'll be revenged, by heaven! (Exeunt.)

Wife.—How dost thou like this, George?

Cit.—Why, this is well, dovey; but if Ralph were hot once, thou shouldst see more.

Wife.—The fiddlers go again, husband.

Cit.—Ay, Neff, but this is scurvy music; I gave the young gallows money, and I think he has not got me the waits of Southwark. If I hear 'em not anon, I'll twing him by the ears. You musicians play Baloo.

Wife.—No, good George, let's have Lachrymæ.

Cit.—Why, this is it, bird.

Wife.—Is't? All the better, George; now, sweet lamb, what story is that painted upon the cloth? The Confutation of St. Paul?

Cit.—No, lamb, that's Ralph and Lucrece.

Wife.—Ralph and Lucrece? Which Ralph? our Ralph?

Cit.—No, mouse; that was a Tartarian.

Wife.—A Tartarian? Well, I would the fiddlers had done, that we might see our Ralph again.

ACT III. SCENE I.

Enter Jasper and Luce.

Jasper.—Come, my dear dear; though we have lost our way,
We have not lost ourselves. Are you not weary
With this night's wand'ring, broken from your rest?
And frighted with the terror that attends
The darkness of this wild unpeopled place?

Luce.—No, my best friend, I cannot either fear
Or entertain a weary thought whilst you
(The end of all my full desires) stand by me.
Let them that lose their hopes, and live to languish
Among the number of forsaken lovers,
Tell the long weary steps and number time,
Start at a shadow, and shrink up their blood,
Whilst I (possessed with all content and quiet)
Thus take my pretty love, and thus embrace him.

Jasp.—You've caught me, Luce, so fast, that whilst I live
I shall become your faithful prisoner,
And wear these chains forever. Come, sit down,
And rest your body, too, too delicate
For these disturbances; so, will you sleep?
Come, do not be more able than you are;
I know you are not skillful in these watches,
For women are no soldiers; be not nice,
But take it; sleep, I say.

Luce.—I cannot sleep,
Indeed I cannot, friend.

Jasp.—Why, then we'll sing,
And try how that will work upon our senses.

Luce.—I'll sing, or say, or anything but sleep.

Jasp.—Come, little mermaid, rob me of my heart
With that enchanting voice.

Luce.—You mock me, Jasper.

SONG.

Jasp.—Tell me, dearest, what is love?

Luce.—'Tis a lightning from above,

'Tis an arrow, 'tis a fire,

'Tis a boy they call Desire.

'Tis a smile

Doth beguile

Jasp.—The poor hearts of men that prove.

Tell me more, are women true?

Luce.—Some love change, and so do you.

Jasp.—Are they fair, and never kind?

Luce.—Yes, when men turn with the wind.

Jasp.—Are they froward?

Luce.—Ever toward

Those that love, to love anew.

Jasp.—Dissemble it no more, I see the god
Of heavy sleep lays on his heavy mace
Upon your eyelids.

Luce.— I am very heavy.

Jasp.—Sleep, sleep, and quiet rest crown thy sweet thoughts:

Keep from her fair blood all distempers, startings,

Horrors and fearful shapes: let all her dreams

Be joys and chaste delights, embraces, wishes,

And such new pleasures as the ravish'd soul

Gives to the senses. So, my charms have took.

Keep her, ye Powers Divine, whilst I contemplate

Upon the wealth and beauty of her mind.

She's only fair and constant, only kind,

And only to thee, Jasper. O my joys!

Whither will you transport me? Let not fullness

Of my poor buried hopes come up together,

And overcharge my spirits; I am weak.

Some say (however ill) the sea and women

Are govern'd by the moon, both ebb and flow,
 Both full of changes: yet to them that know,
 And truly judge, these but opinions are,
 And heresies to bring on pleasing war
 Between our tempers, that without these were
 Both void of after-love and present fear;
 Which are the best of Cupid. O thou child!
 Bred from despair, I dare not entertain thee,
 Having a love without the faults of women,
 And greater in her perfect goods than men;
 Which to make good, and please myself the stronger,
 Though certainly I'm certain of her love,
 I'll try her, that the world and memory
 May sing to after-times her constancy.
 Luce, Luce, awake!

Luce.— Why do you fright me, friend,
 With those distempered looks? What makes your sword
 Drawn in your hand? Who hath offended you?
 I prithee, Jasper, sleep; thou'rt wild with watching.

Jasp.—Come, make your way to heav'n, and bid the world,
 With all the villainies that stick upon it,
 Farewell; you're for another life.

Lucc.— Oh, Jasper,
 How have my tender years committed evil,
 Especially against the man I love,
 Thus to be cropt untimely?

Jasp.— Foolish girl,
 Canst thou imagine I could love his daughter
 That flung me from my fortune into nothing?
 Dischargéd me his service, shut the doors
 Upon my poverty, and scorn'd my prayers,
 Sending me, like a boat without a mast,
 To sink or swim? Come, by this hand you die;
 I must have life and blood, to satisfy
 Your father's wrongs.

Wife.—Away, George, away; raise the watch at Ludgate,
 and bring a mittimus from the justice for this desperate vil-
 lain. Now, I charge you, gentlemen, see the king's peace kept.
 Oh, my heart, what a varlet's this, to offer manslaughter upon
 the harmless gentlewoman!

Cit.—I warrant thee, sweetheart, we'll have him hampered.

Luce.—Oh, Jasper! be not cruel.

If thou wilt kill me, smile, and do it quickly,

And let not many deaths appear before me.

I am a woman made of fear and love,

A weak, weak woman; kill not with thy eyes:

They shoot me through and through. Strike, I am ready,

And dying, still I love thee.

Enter Merchant, Humphrey and his men.

Merchant.—Whereabouts?

Jasper.—No more of this; now to myself again.

Humphrey.—There, there he stands with sword, like martial knight,

Drawn in his hand; therefore beware the fight,

You that are wise; for were I good Sir Bevis,

I would not stay his coming, by your leaves.

Merch.—Sirrah, restore my daughter.

Jasp.—Sirrah, no.

Merch.—Upon him, then.

Wife.—So, down with him, down with him, down with him!

Cut him i' the leg, boys, cut him i' the leg!

Merch.—Come your ways, minion, I'll provide a cage for you, you're grown so tame. Horse her away.

Hum.—Truly I am glad your forces have the day.

(Exeunt.)

Manet Jasper.

Jasp.—They're gone, and I am hurt; my love is lost,

Never to get again. Oh, me unhappy!

Bleed, bleed and die—— I cannot; oh, my folly!

Thou hast betrayed me; hope, where art thou fled?

Tell me, if thou be'st anywhere remaining.

Shall I but see my love again? Oh, no!

She will not deign to look upon her butcher,

Nor is it fit she should; yet I must venture.

Oh, chance, or fortune, or whate'er thou art

That men adore for powerful, hear my cry,

And let me loving live, or losing die.

(Exit.)

Wife.—Is he gone, George?

Cit.—Ay, coney.

Wife.—Marry, and let him go, sweetheart, by the faith a my body, a has put me into such a fright that I tremble (as they say) as 'twere an aspen leaf. Look a my little finger, George, how it shakes: now, in truth, every member of my body is the worse for't.

Cit.—Come, hug in mine arms, sweet mouse; he shall not fright thee any more; alas, mine own dear heart, how it quivers!

Enter Mistress Merry-thought, Ralph, Michael, Squire, Dwarf,
Host and a Tapster.

Wife.—Oh, Ralph! how dost thou, Ralph? How hast thou slept to-night? Has the knight used thee well?

Cit.—Peace, Nell; let Ralph alone.

Tapster.—Master, the reckoning is not paid.

Ralph.—Right courteous knight, who for the order's sake
Which thou hast ta'en, hang'st out the holy Bell,
As I this flaming pestle bear about,
We render thanks to your puissant self,
Your beauteous lady, and your gentle squires,
For thus refreshing of our wearied limbs,
Stiffened with hard achievements in wild desert.

Tap.—Sir, there is twelve shillings to pay.

Ralph.—Thou merry squire Tapstero, thanks to thee
For comforting our souls with double jug;
And if adventurous fortune prick thee forth,
Thou jovial squire, to follow feats of arms,
Take heed thou tender ev'ry lady's cause,
Ev'ry true knight, and ev'ry damsel fair,
But spill the blood of treacherous Saracens
And false enchanter, that with magic spells
Have done to death full many a noble knight.

Host.—Thou valiant Knight of the Burning Pestle, give ear to me: there is twelve shillings to pay, and as I am a true knight, I will not bate a penny.

Wife.—George, I prithee tell me, must Ralph pay twelve shillings now?

Cit.—No, Nell, no, nothing; but the old knight is merry with Ralph.

Wife.—Oh, isn't nothing else? Ralph will be as merry as he.

Ralph.—Sir Knight, this mirth of yours becomes you well,

But to requite this liberal courtesy,

If any of your squires will follow arms,

He shall receive from my heroic hand

A knighthood, by the virtue of this pestle.

Host.—Fair knight, I thank you for your noble offer; therefore, gentle knight, twelve shillings you must pay, or I must cap you.

Wife.—Look, George, did not I tell thee as much? The knight of the Bell is in earnest. Ralph shall not be beholding to him; give him his money, George, and let him go snick-up.

Cit.—Cap Ralph? No; hold your hand, Sir Knight of the Bell; there's your money. Have you anything to say to Ralph now? Cap Ralph?

Wife.—I would you should know it, Ralph has friends that will not suffer him to be capped for ten times so much, and ten times to the end of that. Now take thy course, Ralph.

Mistress Merry-thought.—Come, Michael, thou and I will go home to thy father; he hath enough left to keep us a day or two, and we'll set fellows abroad to cry our purse and casket. Shall we, Michael?

Michael.—Ay, I pray, mother; in truth, my feet are full of chilblains with travelling.

Wife.—Faith, and those chilblains are a foul trouble. Mistress Merry-thought, when your youth comes home, let him rub all the soles of his feet and his heels and his ankles with a mouse-skin; or if none of you can catch a mouse, when he goes to bed, let him roll his feet in the warm embers, and I warrant you he shall be well; and you may make him put his fingers between his toes and smell to them; it's very sovereign for his head if he be costive.

Mist. Mer.—Master Knight of the Burning Pestle, my son Michael and I bid you farewell; I thank your worship heartily for your kindness.

Ralph.—Farewell, fair lady, and your tender squire.
 If, pricking through these deserts, I do hear
 Of any trait'rous knight who, through his guile,
 Hath light upon your casket and your purse,
 I will despoil him of them and restore them.

Mist. Mer.—I thank your worship. (Exit with Michael.)

Ralph.—Dwarf, bear my shield; squire, elevate my lance;
 And now farewell, you knight of holy Bell.

Cit.—Ay, ay, Ralph; all is paid.

Ralph.—But yet before I go, speak, worthy knight,
 If aught you do of sad adventures know,
 Where errant knight may through his prowess win
 Eternal fame, and free some gentle souls
 From endless bonds of steel and ling'ring pain.

Host.—Sirrah, go to Nick the Barber, and bid him prepare
 himself, as I told you before, quickly.

Tap.—I am gone, sir. (Exit Tapster.)

Host.—Sir Knight, this wilderness affordeth none
 But the great venture, where full many a knight
 Hath tried his prowess, and come off with shame,
 And where I would not have you lose your life,
 Against no man, but furious fiend of hell.

Ralph.—Speak on, Sir Knight; tell what he is, and where:
 For here I vow upon my blazing badge,
 Never to lose a day in quietness;
 But bread and water will I only eat,
 And the green herb and rock shall be my couch,
 Till I have quell'd that man, or beast, or fiend,
 That works such damage to all errant knights.

Host.—Not far from hence, near to a craggy cliff
 At the north end of this distressed town,
 There doth stand a lowly house
 Ruggedly builded, and in it a cave,
 In which an ugly giant now doth dwell,
 Yclepéd Barbaroso: in his hand
 He shakes a naked lance of purest steel,
 With sleeves turned up, and he before him wears
 A motley garment, to preserve his clothes

From blood of those knights which he massacres,
And ladies gent: without his door doth hang
A copper basin on a prickant spear;
At which, no sooner gentle knights can knock,
But the shrill sound fierce Barbaroso hears,
And, rushing forth, brings in the errant knight,
And sets him down in an enchanted chair:
Then with an engine, which he hath prepar'd
With forty teeth, he claws his courtly crown,
Next makes him wink, and underneath his chin
He plants a brazen piece of mighty bore,
And knocks his bullets round about his cheeks,
Whilst with his fingers, and an instrument
With which he snaps his hair off, he doth fill
The wretch's ears with a most hideous noise.
Thus every knight adventurer he doth trim,
And now no creature dares encounter him.

Ralph.—In God's name, I will fight with him, kind sir.
Go but before me to this dismal cave
Where this huge giant Barbaroso dwells,
And by that virtue that brave Rosiclere
That wicked brood of ugly giants slew,
And Palmerin Frannarco overthrew,
I doubt not but to curb this traitor foul,
And to the devil send his guilty soul.

Host.—Brave-sprighted knight, thus far I will perform
This your request; I'll bring you within sight
Of this most loathsome place, inhabited
By a more loathsome man: but dare not stay,
For his main force swoops all he sees away.

Ralph.—St. George! Set on; before march squire and page.

(Exeunt.)

Wife.—George, dost think Ralph will confound the giant?

Cit.—I hold my cap to a farthing he does. Why, Nell, I
saw him wrestle with the great Dutchman, and hurl him.

Wife.—Faith, and that Dutchman was a goodly man, if all
things were answerable to his bigness. And yet they say there
was a Scottishman higher than he, and that they two on a
night met, and saw one another for nothing.

Cit.—Nay, by your leave, Nell, Ninivie was better.

Wife.—Ninivie? Oh, that was the story of Joan and the Wall, was it not, George?

Cit.—Yes, lamb.

Enter Mistress Merry-thought.

Wife.—Look, George, here comes Mistress Merry-thought again, and I would have Ralph come and fight with the giant. I tell you true, I long to see't.

Cit.—Good Mistress Merry-thought, begone, I pray you, for my sake; I pray you forbear a little, you shall have audience presently: I have a little business.

Wife.—Mistress Merry-thought, if it please you to refrain your passion a little, till Ralph have dispatched the giant out of the way, we shall think ourselves much bound to thank you. I thank you, good Mistress Merry-thought.

(Exit Mistress Merry-thought.)

Enter a Boy.

Cit.—Boy, come hither; send away Ralph and this master giant quickly.

Boy.—In good faith, sir, we cannot; you'll utterly spoil our play, and make it to be hissed, and it cost money; you will not suffer us to go on with our plots. I pray, gentlemen, rule him.

Cit.—Let him come now and dispatch this, and I'll trouble you no more.

Boy.—Will you give me your hand of that?

Wife.—Give him thy hand, George, do, and I'll kiss him; I warrant thee the youth means plainly.

Boy.—I'll send him to you presently. (Exit Boy.)

Wife.—I thank you, little youth; faith, the child hath a sweet breath, George, but I think it be troubled with the worms; Carduus Benedictus and mare's milk were the only thing in the world for it. Oh, Ralph's here, George! God send thee good luck, Ralph!

Enter Ralph, Host, Squire and Dwarf.

Host.—Puissant knight, yonder his mansion is,

Lo, where the spear and copper basin are;

Behold the string on which hangs many a tooth
Drawn from the gentle jaw of wandering knights;
I dare not stay to sound, he will appear. (Exit host.)

Ralph.—Oh, faint not, heart: Susan, my dear lady,
The cobbler's maid in Milk street, for whose sake
I take these arms, Oh, let the thought of thee
Carry thy knight through all adventurous deed,
And in the honor of thy beauteous self,
May I destroy this monster Barbaroso.
Knock, squire, upon the basin till it break
With the shrill strokes, or till the giant speak.

Enter Barbaroso.

Wife.—Oh, George, the giant, the giant! Now, Ralph, for thy life!

Barbaroso.—What fond unknowing wight is this, that dares
So rudely knock at Barbaroso's cell,
Where no man comes, but leaves his fleece behind?

Ralph.—I, traitorous caitiff, who am sent by fate
To punish all the sad enormities
Thou hast committed against ladies gent
And errant knights, traitor to God and men.
Prepare thyself; this is the dismal hour
Appointed for thee to give strict account
Of all thy beastly treacherous villainies.

Bar.—Foolhardy knight, full soon thou shalt aby
This fond reproach; thy body will I bang,
(He takes down his pole.)

And lo, upon that string thy teeth shall hang;
Prepare thyself, for dead soon shalt thou be.

Ralph.—St. George for me! (They fight.)

Bar.—Gargantua for me!

Wife.—To him, Ralph, to him: hold up the giant, set out thy leg before, Ralph!

Cit.—Falsify a blow, Ralph, falsify a blow; the giant lies open on the left side.

Wife.—Bear't off, bear't off still; there, boy. Oh, Ralph's almost down, Ralph's almost down!

Ralph.—Susan, inspire me; now have up again.

Wife.—Up, up, up, up, up, so, Ralph; down with him, down with him, Ralph!

Cit.—Fetch him over the hip, boy.

Wife.—There, boy; kill, kill, kill, kill, kill, Ralph!

Cit.—No, Ralph, get all out of him first.

Ralph.—Presumptuous man, see to what desperate end

Thy treachery hath brought thee; the just gods,

Who never prosper those that do despise them,

For all the villainies which thou hast done

To knights and ladies, now have paid thee home

By my stiff arm, a knight adventurous.

But say, vile wretch, before I send thy soul

To sad Avernus, whither it must go,

What captives hold'st thou in thy sable cave?

Bar.—Go in and free them all; thou hast the day.

Ralph.—Go, squire and dwarf, search in this dreadful cave,
And free the wretched prisoners from their bonds.

(*Exeunt Squire and Dwarf.*)

Bar.—I crave for mercy, as thou art a knight,
And scorn'st to spill the blood of those that beg.

Ralph.—Thou showest no mercy, nor shalt thou have any;
Prepare thyself, for thou shalt surely die.

Enter Squire, leading one winking, with a basin under his chin.

Squire.—Behold, brave knight, here is one prisoner,
Whom this wild man hath used as you see.

Wife.—This is the wisest word I hear the squire speak.

Ralph.—Speak what thou art, and how thou hast been us'd,
That I may give him condign punishment.

First Knight.—I am a knight that took my journey post
Northward from London, and in courteous wise;
This giant train'd me to his loathsome den,
Under pretense of killing of the itch,
And all my body with a powder strew'd,
That smarts and stings, and cut away my beard,
And my curl'd locks wherein were ribands tied,

And with a water washed my tender eyes
(Whilst up and down about me still he skipt),
Whose virtue is, that till my eyes be wiped
With a dry cloth, for this my foul disgrace,
I shall not dare to look a dog i' th' face.

Wife.—Alas, poor knight! Relieve him, Ralph; relieve
poor knights whilst you live.

Ralph.—My trusty squire, convey him to the town,
Where he may find relief; adieu, fair knight.

(Exit Knight.)

Enter Dwarf, leading one with a patch over his nose.

Dwarf.—Puissant Knight of the Burning Pestle hight,
See here another wretch, whom this foul beast
Hath scotch'd and scor'd in this inhuman wise.

Ralph.—Speak me thy name, and eke thy place of birth,
And what hath been thy usage in this cave.

Second Knight.—I am a knight, Sir Partle is my name,
And by my birth I am a Londoner,
Free by my copy, but my ancestors
Were Frenchmen all; and riding hard this way,
Upon a trotting horse, my bones did ache,
And I, faint knight, to ease my weary limbs,
Light at this cave, when straight this furious fiend,
With sharpest instrument of purest steel,
Did cut the gristle of my nose away,
And in the place this velvet plaster stands.
Relieve me, gentle knight, out of his hands.

Wife.—Good Ralph, relieve Sir Partle, and send him away,
for in truth, his breath stinks.

Ralph.—Convey him straight after the other knight. Sir
Partle, fare you well.

Second Knight.—Kind sir, good-night.

(Exit.)

(Cries within.)

Man.—Deliver us!

Woman.—Deliver us!

Wife.—Hark, George, what a woeful cry there is. I think
some one is ill there.

Man.—Deliver us!

Wom.—Deliver us!

Ralph.—What ghastly noise is this? Speak, Barbaroso,
Or, by this blazing steel, thy head goes off.

Bar.—Prisoners of mine, whom I in diet keep.

Send lower down into the cave,
And in a tub that's heated smoking hot,
There may they find them, and deliver them.

Ralph.—Run, squire and dwarf, deliver them with speed.
(*Exeunt Squire and Dwarf.*)

Wife.—But will not Ralph kill this giant? Surely I am
afraid if he let him go he will do as much hurt as ever he did.

Cit.—Not so, mouse, neither, if he could convert him.

Wife.—Ay, George, if he could convert him; but a giant is
not so soon converted as one of us ordinary people. There's a
pretty tale of a witch, that had the devil's mark about her, God
bless us, that had a giant to her son, that was called Lob-lie-
by-the-fire. Didst never hear it, George?

Enter Squire, leading a man with a glass of lotion in his hand,
and the Dwarf, leading a woman with bread and drink.

Cit.—Peace, Nell; here come the prisoners.

Dwarf.—Here be these pined wretches, manful knight,
That for these six weeks have not seen a wight.

Ralph.—Deliver what you are, and how you came
To this sad cave, and what your usage was.

Man.—I am an errant knight that followed arms,
With spear and shield, and in my tender years
I stricken was with Cupid's fiery shaft,
And fell in love with this my lady dear,
And stole her from her friends in Turnball street,
And bore her up and down from town to town,
Where we did eat and drink, and music hear;
Till at the length at this unhappy town
We did arrive, and coming to this cave,
This beast us caught, and put us in a tub,
Where we this two months sweat, and should have done
Another month if you had not relieved us.

Wom.—This bread and water hath our diet been,
Together with a rib cut from a neck
Of burned mutton; hard hath been our fare.
Release us from this ugly giant's snare.

Man.—This hath been all the food we have receiv'd;
But only twice a day, for novelty,
He gave a spoonful of this hearty broth
(Pulls out a syringe.)

To each of us, through this same slender quill.

Ralph.—From this infernal monster you shall go,
That useth knights and gentle ladies so.
Convey them hence. (Exeunt Man and Woman.)

Cit.—Mouse, I can tell thee, the gentlemen like Ralph.

Wife.—Ay, George, I see it well enough. Gentlemen, I
thank you all heartily for gracing my man Ralph, and I promise you, you shall see him oftener.

Bar.—Mercy! great knight; I do recant my ill,
And henceforth never again gentle blood will spill.

Ralph.—I give thee mercy, but yet thou shalt swear
Upon my burning pestle to perform
Thy promise utter'd.

Bar.—I swear and kiss.

Ralph.—Depart, then, and amend.

Come, squire and dwarf, the sun grows toward his set,
And we have many more adventures yet. (Exeunt.)

Cit.—Now Ralph is in this humor, I know he would ha' beaten all the boys in the house, if they had been set on him.

Wife.—Ay, George, but it is well as it is. I warrant you the gentlemen do consider what it is to overthrow a giant. But look, George, here comes Mistress Merry-thought and her son Michael. Now you are welcome, Mistress Merry-thought; now Ralph has done, you may go on.

Enter Mistress Merry-thought and Michael.

Mistress Merry-thought.—Mick, my boy.

Michael.—Ay, forsooth, mother.

Mist. Mer.—Be merry, Mick; we are at home, now, where I warrant you, you shall find the house flung out of the win-

dows. Hark! hey dogs, hey, this is the old world, i'faith, with my husband. I'll get in among them, I'll play them such a lesson that they shall have little list to come scraping hither again. Why, Master Merry-thought, husband, Charles Merry-thought!

Old Merry-thought.—(Within.) “If you will sing and dance and laugh,

And holloa, and laugh again;

And then cry, there, boys, there; why then,

One, two, three and four,

We shall be merry within this hour.”

Mist. Mer.—Why, Charles, do you not know your own natural wife? I say, open the door, and turn me out those mangy companions; 'tis more than time that they were fellow like with you. You are a gentleman, Charles, and an old man, and father of two children; and I myself, though I say it, by my mother's side, niece to a worshipful gentleman, and a conductor; he has been three times in his majesty's service at Chester, and is now the fourth time, God bless him, and his charge upon his journey.

Old Mer.—“Go from my window, love, go;

Go from my window, my dear,

The wind and the rain will drive you back again,

You cannot be lodgéd here.”

Hark you, Mistress Merry-thought, you that walk upon adventures and forsake your husband because he sings with never a penny in his purse; what, shall I think myself the worse? Faith, no, I'll be merry. You come not here, here's none but lads of mettle, lives of a hundred years and upward; care never drunk their bloods, nor want made them warble,

“Heigh-ho, my heart is heavy.”

Mist. Mer.—Why, Master Merry-thought, what am I, that you should laugh me to scorn thus abruptly? Am I not your fellow-feeler, as we may say, in all our miseries? your comforter in health and sickness? Have I not brought you children? Are they not like you, Charles? Look upon thine own image, hard-hearted man; and yet for all this—

Old Mer.—(Within.) “Begone, begone, my juggy, my puggy,
Begone, my love, my dear;

The weather is warm,
'Twill do thee no harm,
Thou canst not be lodgéd here."

Be merry, boys; some light music, and more wine.

Wife.—He's not in earnest, I hope, George, is he?

Cit.—What if he be, sweetheart?

Wife.—Marry, if he be, George, I'll make bold to tell him he's an ingrant old man, to use his wife so scurvily.

Cit.—What, how does he use her, honey?

Wife.—Marry, come up, Sir Sauce-box; I think you'll take his part, will you not? Lord, how hot are you grown; you are a fine man, an' you had a fine dog, it becomes you sweetly.

Cit.—Nay, prithee, Nell, chide not; for as I am an honest man, and a true Christian grocer, I do not like his doings.

Wife.—I cry you mercy, then, George; you know we are all frail, and full of infirmities. D'ye hear, Master Merry-thought, may I crave a word with you?

Old Mer.—(Within.) Strike up lively, lads.

Wife.—I had not thought, in truth, Master Merry-thought, that a man of your age and discretion, as I may say, being a gentleman, and therefore known by your gentle conditions, could have used so little respect to the weakness of his wife; for your wife is your own flesh, the staff of your age, your yoke-fellow, with whose help you draw through the mire of this transitory world. Nay, she is your own rib. And again—

Old Mer.—"I come not hither for thee to teach,
I have no pulpit for thee to preach,
As thou art a lady gay."

Wife.—Marry, with a vengeance! I am heartily sorry for the poor gentlewoman; but if I were thy wife, i'faith, gray-beard, i'faith—

Cit.—I prithee, sweet honeysuckle, be content.

Wife.—Give me such words that am a gentlewoman born! hang him, hoary rascal! Get me some drink, George, I am almost molten with fretting. Now, beshrew his knave's heart for it.

Old Mer.—Play me a light lavalto. Come, be frolic; fill the good fellows wine.

Mist. Mer.—Why, Master Merry-thought, are you disposed to make me wait here? You'll open, I hope; I'll fetch them that shall open, else.

Old Mer.—Good woman, if you will sing, I'll give you something; if not——

SONG.

You are no love for me, Marget,

I am no love for you.

Come aloft, boys, aloft.

Mist. Mer.—Now, a churl's fist in your teeth, sir. Come, Mick, we'll not trouble him; a shall not ding us i' th' teeth with his bread and his broth, that he shall not. Come, boy, I'll provide for thee, I warrant thee. We'll go to Master Venterwels, the merchant; I'll get his letter to mine host of the Bell in Waltham; there I'll place thee with the tapster. Will not that do well for thee, Mick? And let me alone for that old rascally knave, your father; I'll use him in his kind. I warrant ye.

Wife.—Come, George, where's the beer?

Cit.—Here, love.

Wife.—This old fumigating fellow will not out of my mind yet. Gentlemen, I'll begin to you all, I desire more of your acquaintance, with all my heart. Fill the gentlemen some beer, George.

ACT IV. SCENE I.

Boy dances.

Wife.—Look, George, the little boy's come again; methinks he looks something like the Prince of Orange, in his long stocking, if he had a little harness about his neck. George, I will have him dance Fading; Fading is a fine jig, I'll assure you, gentlemen. Begin, brother; now a capers, sweetheart; now a turn a th' toe, and then tumble. Cannot you tumble, youth?

Boy.—No, indeed, forsooth.

Wife.—Nor eat fire?

Boy.—Neither.

Wife.—Why, then I thank you heartily; there's twopence to buy you points withal.

Enter Jasper and Boy.

Jasper.—There, boy, deliver this. But do it well.
Hast thou provided me with four lusty fellows,
Able to carry me? And art thou perfect
In all thy business?

Boy.—Sir, you need not fear;
I have my lesson here, and cannot miss it:
The men are ready for you, and what else
Pertains to this employment.

Jasp.—There, my boy;
Take it, but buy no land.

Boy.—Faith, sir, 'twere rare
To see so young a purchaser. I fly,
And on my wings carry your destiny. (Exit.)

Jasp.—Go, and be happy. Now, my latest hope
Forsake me not, but fling thy anchor out,
And let it hold. Stand fixed, thou rolling stone,
Till I possess my dearest. Hear me, all
You powers, that rule in men, celestial. (Exit.)

Wife.—Go thy ways; thou art as crooked a sprig as ever
grew in London. I warrant him he'll come to some naughty
end or other; for his looks say no less. Besides, his father
(you know, George) is none of the best; you heard him take
me up like a gill flirt, and sing bad songs upon me. But,
i'faith, if I live, George——

Cit.—Let me alone, sweetheart; I have a trick in my head
shall lodge him in the Arches for one year, and make him sing
Peccavi, ere I leave him, and yet he shall never know who hurt
him, neither.

Wife.—Do, my good George, do.

Cit.—What shall we have Ralph do now, boy?

Boy.—You shall have what you will, sir.

Cit.—Why, so, sir, go and fetch me him, then, and let the
Sophy of Persia come and christen him a child.

Boy.—Believe me, sir, that will not do so well; 'tis stale; it has been had before at the Red Bull.

Wife.—George, let Ralph travel over great hills, and let him be weary, and come to the King of Cracovia's house, covered with black velvet, and there let the king's daughter stand in her window all in beaten gold, combing her golden locks with a comb of ivory, and let her spy Ralph, and fall in love with him, and come down to him, and carry him into her father's house, and then let Ralph talk with her.

Cit.—Well said, Nell; it shall be so. Boy, let's ha't done quickly.

Boy.—Sir, if you will imagine all this to be done already, you shall hear them talk together. But we cannot present a house covered with black velvet, and a lady in beaten gold.

Cit.—Sir Boy, let's ha't as you can, then.

Boy.—Besides, it will show ill-favoredly to have a grocer's 'prentice to court a king's daughter.

Cit.—Will it so, sir? You are well read in histories: I pray you what was Sir Dagonet? Was not he 'prentice to a grocer in London? Read the play of the "Four 'Prentices of London," where they toss their pikes so. I pray you fetch him in, sir; fetch him in.

Boy.—It shall be done; it is not our fault, gentlemen.

(Exit.)

Wife.—Now we shall see fine doings, I warrant thee, George. Oh, here they come; how prettily the King of Cracovia's daughter is dressed!

Enter Ralph and the Lady, Squire and Dwarf.

Cit.—Ay, Nell, it is the fashion of that country, I warrant thee.

Lady.—Welcome, Sir Knight, unto my father's court,
King of Moldavia, unto me, Pompiona,
His daughter dear. But sure you do not like
Your entertainment, that will stay with us
No longer but a night.

Ralph.— Damsel right fair,
I am on many sad adventures bound,

That call me forth into the wilderness.
Besides, my horse's back is something gall'd,
Which will enforce me ride a sober pace.
But many thanks, fair lady, be to you,
For using errant knight with courtesy.

Lady.—But say, brave knight, what is your name and birth?

Ralph.—My name is Ralph. I am an Englishman,
As true as steel, a hearty Englishman,
And prentice to a grocer in the Strand,
By deed indent, of which I have one part:
But fortune calling me to follow arms,
On me this holy order I did take,
Of Burning Pestle, which in all men's eyes
I bear, confounding ladies' enemies.

Lady.—Oft have I heard of your brave countrymen,
And fertile soil, and store of wholesome food;
My father oft will tell me of a drink
In England found, and Nipitato call'd,
Which driveth all the sorrow from your hearts.

Ralph.—Lady, 'tis true; you need not lay your lips
To better Nipitato than there is.

Lady.—And of a wildfowl he will often speak,
Which powdered beef and mustard called is:
For there have been great wars 'twixt us and you;
But truly, Ralph, it was not long of me.
Tell me, then, Ralph, could you contented be
To wear a lady's favor in your shield?

Ralph.—I am a knight of a religious order,
And will not wear a favor of a lady
That trusts in Antichrist and false traditions.

Cit.—Well said, Ralph; convert her if thou canst.

Ralph.—Besides, I have a lady of my own
In merry England, for whose virtuous sake
I took these arms, and Susan is her name,
A cobbler's maid in Milk street, whom I vow
Ne'er to forsake whilst life and pestle last.

Lady.—Happy that cobbling dame, whoe'er she be,
That for her own dear Ralph hath gotten thee.

Unhappy I, that ne'er shall see the day
To see thee more, that bear'st my heart away.

Ralph.—Lady, farewell; I must needs take my leave.

Lady.—Hard-hearted Ralph, that ladies dost deceive.

Cit.—Hark thee, Ralph, there's money for thee; give something in the King of Cracovia's house; be not beholding to him.

Ralph.—Lady, before I go, I must remember
Your father's officers, who, truth to tell,
Have been about me very diligent:
Hold up thy snowy hand, thou princely maid.
There's twelvepence for your father's chamberlain,
And there's another shilling for his cook,
For, by my troth, the goose was roasted well.
And twelvepence for your father's horse-keeper,
For 'nointing my horse back; and for his butler,
There is another shilling; to the maid
That wash'd my boot-hose, there's an English groat,
And twopence to the boy that wip'd my boots.
And last, fair lady, there is for yourself
Threepence to buy you pins at Bumbo Fair.

Lady.—Full many thanks, and I will keep them safe
Till all the heads be off, for thy sake, Ralph.

Ralph.—Advance, my squire and dwarf; I cannot stay.

Lady.—Thou kill'st my heart in parting thus away.

(Exeunt.)

Wife.—I commend Ralph yet, that he will not stoop to a Cracovian; there's properer women in London than any are there, I wis. But here comes Master Humphrey and his love again; now, George.

Cit.—Ay, bird, peace.

Enter Merchant, Humphrey, Luce and Boy.

Merchant.—Go, get you up; I will not be entreated.
And, gossip mine, I'll keep you sure hereafter
From gadding out again with boys and unthrifths;
Come, they are women's tears; I know your fashion.

Go, sirrah, lock her in, and keep the key

(Exeunt Luce and Boy.)

Safe as your life. Now, my son Humphrey,
You may both rest assuréd of my love
In this, and reap your own desire.

Humphrey.—I see this love you speak of, through your daughter,

Although the hole be little; and hereafter
Will yield the like in all I may or can,
Fitting a Christian and a gentleman.

Merch.—I do believe you, my good son, and thank you,
For 'twere an impudence to think you flattered.

Hum.—It were indeed, but shall I tell you why,
I have been beaten twice about the lie.

Merch.—Well, son, no more of compliment; my daughter
Is yours again: appoint the time and take her.
We'll have no stealing for it; I myself
And some few of our friends will see you married.

Hum.—I would you would, i'faith, for be it known,
I ever was afraid to lie alone.

Merch.—Some three days hence, then.

Hum.—Three days; let me see;
'Tis somewhat of the most, yet I agree,
Because I mean against the 'pointed day,
To visit all my friends in new array.

Enter Servant.

Servant.—Sir, there's a gentlewoman without would speak
with your worship.

Merch.—What is she?

Serv.—Sir, I asked her not.

Merch.—Bid her come in.

Enter Mistress Merry-thought and Michael.

Mistress Merry-thought.—Peace be to your worship, I come
as a poor suitor to you, sir, in the behalf of this child.

Merch.—Are you not wife to Merry-thought?

Mist. Mer.—Yes, truly; would I had ne'er seen his eyes; he has undone me and himself and his children, and there he lives at home and sings and hoits and revels among his drunken companions; but I warrant you, where to get a penny to put bread in his mouth he knows not. And therefore, if it like your worship, I would entreat your letter to the honest host of the Bell in Waltham, that I may place my child under the protection of his tapster, in some settled course of life.

Merch.—I'm glad the heav'ns have heard my prayers. Thy husband,

When I was ripe in sorrows, laughed at me;
 Thy son, like an unthankful wretch, I having
 Redeem'd him from his fall, and made him mine,
 To show his love again, first stole my daughter,
 Then wrong'd this gentleman, and last of all
 Gave me that grief, had almost brought me down
 Unto my grave, had not a stronger hand
 Reliev'd my sorrows. Go, and weep as I did,
 And be unpitied, for here I profess
 An everlasting hate to all thy name.

Mist. Mer.—Will you so, sir, how say you by that? Come, Mick, let him keep his wind to cool his pottage; we'll go to thy nurse's, Mick; she knits silk stockings, boy; and we'll knit, too, boy, and be beholding to none of them all.

(Exeunt Michael and mother.)

Enter a Boy with a letter.

Boy.—Sir, I take it you are the master of this house.

Merch.—How then, boy?

Boy.—Then to yourself, sir, comes this letter.

Merch.—From whom, my pretty boy?

Boy.—From him that was your servant, but no more
 Shall that name ever be, for he is dead.
 Grief of your purchas'd anger broke his heart;
 I saw him die, and from his hand receiv'd
 This paper, with a charge to bring it hither;
 Read it, and satisfy yourself in all.

LETTER.

Merch.—"Sir, that I have wronged your love I must confess, in which I have purchas'd to myself, besides mine own undoing, the ill opinion of my friends. Let not your anger, good sir, outlive me, but suffer me to rest in peace with your forgiveness; let my body (if a dying man may so much prevail with you) be brought to your daughter, that she may know my hot flames are now buried, and withal receive a testimony of the zeal I bore her virtue. Farewell forever, and be ever happy.

"JASPER."

God's hand is great in this; I do forgive him,
Yet am I glad he's quiet, where I hope
He will not bite again. Boy, bring the body,
And let him have his will, if that be all.

Boy.—"Tis here without, sir.

Merch.—So, sir, if you please,

You may conduct it in; I do not fear it.

Hum.—I'll be your usher, boy, for though I say it,

He ow'd me something once, and well did pay it.

(Exeunt.)

Enter Luce, alone.

Luce.—If there be any punishment inflicted
Upon the miserable, more than yet I feel,
Let it together seize me, and at once
Press down my soul; I cannot bear the pain
Of these delaying tortures. Thou that art
The end of all, and the sweet rest of all,
Come, come, O Death, and bring me to thy peace,
And blot out all the memory I nourish
Both of my father and my cruel friend.
Oh, wretched maid, still living to be wretched,
To be a say to Fortune in her changes,
And grow to number times and woes together.
How happy had I been, if, being born,
My grave had been my cradle!

Enter Servant.

Servant.—By your leave,
Young mistress, here's a boy hath brought a coffin,
What a would say I know not; but your father
Charg'd me to give you notice. Here they come.

Enter two bearing a coffin, Jasper in it.

Luce.—For me, I hope, 'tis come, and 'tis most welcome.

Boy.—Fair mistress, let me not add greater grief
To that great store you have already; Jasper
(That whilst he liv'd was yours, now's dead,
And here inclos'd) commanded me to bring
His body hither, and to crave a tear
From those fair eyes, though he deserv'd not pity,
To deck his funeral, for so he bid me
Tell her for whom he died.

Luce.—He shall have many. (Exeunt Coffin-carrier and Boy.)
Good friends, depart a little, whilst I take
My leave of this dead man, that once I lov'd:
Hold yet a little, life, and then I give thee
To thy first Heav'nly Being. O my friend!
Hast thou deceiv'd me thus, and got before me?
I shall not long be after, but believe me,
Thou wert too cruel, Jasper, 'gainst thyself,
In punishing the fault I could have pardon'd,
With so untimely death; thou didst not wrong me,
But ever wert most kind, most true, most loving:
And I the most unkind, most false, most cruel.
Didst thou but ask a tear? I'll give thee all,
Even all my eyes can pour down, all my sighs,
And all myself, before thou goest from me.
These are but sparing rites; but if thy soul
Be yet about this place, and can behold
And see what I prepare to deck thee with,
It shall go up, borne on the wings of peace,
And satisfied. First will I sing thy dirge,
Then kiss thy pale lips, and then die myself,
And fill one coffin and one grave together.

SONG.

Come you whose loves are dead,
And whilst I sing,
Weep and wring
Every hand, and every head
Bind with cypress and sad yew;
Ribbons black and candles blue,
For him that was of men most true.

Come with heavy moaning,
And on his grave
Let him have
Sacrifice of sighs and groaning;
Let him have fair flowers enow,
White and purple, green and yellow,
For him that was of men most true.

Thou sable cloth, sad cover of my joys,
I lift thee up, and thus I meet with death.

Jasper.—And thus you meet the living.

Luce.—Save me, heav'n!

Jasp.—Nay, do not fly me, fair, I am no spirit;
Look better on me, do you know me yet?

Luce.—O thou dear shadow of my friend!

Jasp.—Dear substance,

I swear I am no shadow; feel my hand;
It is the same it was: I am your Jasper,
Your Jasper that's yet living, and yet loving.
Pardon my rash attempt, my foolish proof
I put in practice of your constancy.
For sooner should my sword have drunk my blood,
And set my soul at liberty, than drawn
The least drop from that body, for which boldness
Doom me to anything; if death, I take it,
And willingly.

Luce.— This death I'll give you for it:

So, now I'm satisfied; you are no spirit,
But my own truest, truest, truest friend,
Why do you come thus to me?

Jasp.— First, to see you,
Then to convey you hence.

Luce.— It cannot be,
For I am lock'd up here, and watch'd at all hours,
That 'tis impossible for me to 'scape.

Jasp.—Nothing more possible: within this coffin
Do you convey yourself; let me alone,
I have the wits of twenty men about me,
Only I crave the shelter of your closet
A little, and then fear me not; creep in,
That they may presently convey you hence.
Fear nothing, dearest love; I'll be your second;
Lie close, so; all goes well yet. Boy!

Boy.—At hand, sir.

Jasp.—Convey away the coffin, and be wary.

Boy.—'Tis done already.

Jasp.—Now I must go conjure.

Enter Merchant.

Merchant.—Boy, boy!

Boy.—Your servant, sir.

Merch.—Do me this kindness, boy; hold, here's a crown:
before thou bury the body of this fellow, carry it to his old
merry father, and salute him from me, and bid him sing: he
hath cause.

Boy.—I will, sir.

Merch.—And then bring me word what tune he is in,
And have another crown; but do it truly.
I've fitted him a bargain, now, will vex him.

Boy.—God bless your worship's health, sir.

Merch.—Farewell, boy. (Exeunt.)

Enter Master Merry-thought.

Wife.—Ah, Old Merry-thought, art thou there again? Let's
hear some of thy songs.

Old Merry-thought.—"Who can sing a merrier note
Than he that cannot change a groat?"

Not a denier left, and yet my heart leaps; I do wonder yet, as old as I am, that any man will follow a trade, or serve, that may sing and laugh and walk the streets. My wife and both my sons are I know not where; I have nothing left, nor know I how to come by meat to supper, yet am I merry still; for I know I shall find it upon the table at six o'clock; therefore, hang thought.

"I would not be a serving-man
To carry the cloak-bag still,
Nor would I be a falconer
The greedy hawks to fill;
But I would be in a good house,
And have a good master, too;
But I would eat and drink of the best,
And no work would I do."

This is it that keeps life and soul together—mirth. This is the philosopher's stone that they write so much on, that keeps a man ever young.

Enter a Boy.

Boy.—Sir, they say they know all your money is gone, and they will trust you for no more drink.

Old Mer.—Will they not? Let 'em choose. The best is, I have mirth at home, and need not send abroad for that. Let them keep their drink to themselves.

"For Jillian of Berry, she dwells on a hill,
And she hath good beer and ale to sell,
And of good fellows she thinks no ill,
And thither will we go now, now, now, and
thither will we go now.
And when you have made a little stay,
You need not know what is to pay,
But kiss your hostess and go your way,
And thither, etc."

Enter another Boy.

Second Boy.—Sir, I can get no bread for supper.

Old Mer.—Hang bread and supper. Let's preserve our mirth, and we shall never feel hunger, I'll warrant you; let's have a catch. Boy, follow me; come, sing this catch:

"Ho, ho, nobody at home,
Meat, nor drink, nor money ha' we none;
Fill the pot, Eedy,
Never more need I."

So, boys, enough; follow me; let's change our place, and we shall laugh afresh. (Exeunt.)

Wife.—Let him go, George; a shall not have any countenance from us, not a good word from any i' th' company, if I may strike stroke in't.

Cit.—No more a sha'not, love; but, Nell, I will have Ralph do a very notable matter, now, to the eternal honor and glory of all grocers. Sirrah, you, there, boy, can none of you hear?

Boy.—Sir, your pleasure.

Cit.—Let Ralph come out on May-day in the morning, and speak upon a conduit with all his scarfs about him, and his feathers, and his rings, and his knacks.

Boy.—Why, sir, you do not think of our plot; what will become of that, then?

Cit.—Why, sir, I care not what become on't. I'll have him come out, or I'll fetch him out myself; I'll have something done in honor of the city; besides, he hath been long enough upon adventures. Bring him out quickly, for I come amongst you—

Boy.—Well, sir, he shall come out; but if our play miscarry, sir, you are like to pay for't. (Exit.)

Cit.—Bring him away, then.

Wife.—This will be brave, i'faith. George, shall not he dance the morrice, too, for the credit of the Strand?

Cit.—No, sweetheart, it will be too much for the boy. Oh, there he is, Nell; he's reasonable well in repanel, but he has not rings enough.

Enter Ralph.

Ralph.—London, to thee I do present the merry month of May,
Let each true subject be content to hear me what I say:
For from the top of conduit head, as plainly may appear,
I will both tell my name to you, and wherefore I came
here.

My name is Ralph, by due descent, though not ignoble I,
Yet far inferior to the flock of gracious grocery.

And by the common counsel of my fellows in the Strand,
With gilded staff, and crossed scarf, the May lord here I
stand.

Rejoice, O English hearts, rejoice; rejoice, O lovers dear;
Rejoice, O city, town and country; rejoice eke every shire;
For now the fragrant flowers do spring and sprout in
seemly sort,

The little birds do sit and sing, the lambs do make fine
sport;

And now the birchen tree doth bud that makes the
schoolboy cry,

The morrice rings while hobby-horse doth foot it featu-
ously:

The lords and ladies now abroad, for their disport and
play,

Do kiss sometimes upon the grass, and sometimes in the
hay.

Now butter with a leaf of sage is good to purge the
blood,

Fly Venus and Phlebotomy, for they are neither good.

Now little fish on tender stone begin to cast their bellies,
And sluggish snail, that erst were mew'd, do creep out
of their shellies.

The rumbling rivers now do warm, for little boys to
paddle,

The sturdy steed now goes to grass, and up they hang his
saddle.

The heavy hart, the blowing buck, the rascal and the
pricket,

Are now among the yeoman's peas, and leave the fearful
thicket.

And be like them, O you, I say, of this same noble town,
And lift aloft your velvet heads, and slipping of your
gown,

With bells on legs, and napkins clean unto your shoul-
ders tied,

With scarfs and garters as you please, and Hey for our
town! cried.

March out and show your willing minds, by twenty and
by twenty,
To Hogsdon or to Newington, where ale and cakes are
plenty.
And let it ne'er be said for shame, that we, the youths of
London,
Lay thrumming of our caps at home, and left our custom
undone.
Up, then, I say, both young and old, both man and maid
a-maying,
With drums and guns that bounce aloud, and merry tabor
playing.
Which to prolong, God save our king, and send his coun-
try peace,
And root out treason from the land; and so, my friends,
I cease.

ACT V. SCENE I.

Enter Merchant, alone.

Merchant.—I will have no great store of company at the wedding: a couple of neighbors and their wives; and we will have a capon in stewed broth, with marrow, and a good piece of beef stuck with rosemary.

Enter Jasper, with his face mealed.

Jasper.—Forbear thy pains, fond man; it is too late.

Merch.—Heav'n bless me! Jasper!

Jasp.—Ay, I am his ghost,

Whom thou hast injur'd for his constant love:
Fond worldly wretch, who dost not understand
In death that true hearts cannot parted be.
First know, thy daughter is quite borne away
On wings of angels, through the liquid air
Too far out of thy reach, and never more
Shalt thou behold her face; but she and I
Will in another world enjoy our loves,
Where neither father's anger, poverty,
Nor any cross that troubles earthly men,

Shall make us sever our united hearts.
And never shalt thou sit, or be alone
In any place, but I will visit thee
With ghastly looks, and put into thy mind
The great offenses which thou didst to me.
When thou art at thy table with thy friends,
Merry in heart, and fill'd with swelling wine,
I'll come in midst of all thy pride and mirth,
Invisible to all men but thyself,
And whisper such a sad tale in thine ear,
Shall make thee let the cup fall from thy hand,
And stand as mute and pale as death itself.

Merch.—Forgive me, Jasper! Oh! what might I do,
Tell me, to satisfy thy troubled ghost?

Jasp.—There is no means; too late thou think'st on this.

Merch.—But tell me what were best for me to do?

Jasp.—Repent thy deed, and satisfy my father,
And beat fond Humphrey our of thy doors.

(Exit Jasper.)

Enter Humphrey.

Wife.—Look, George, his very ghost would have folks
beaten.

Humphrey.—Father, my bride is gone, fair Mistress Luce.
My soul's the font of vengeance, mischief's sluice.

Merch.—Hence, fool, out of my sight; with thy fond passion
Thou hast undone me.

Hum.—Hold, my father dear,
For Luce, thy daughter's sake, that had no peer.

Merch.—Thy father, fool? There's some blows more; begone!
(Beats him.)

Jasper, I hope thy ghost be well appeased
To see thy will perform'd; now will I go
To satisfy thy father for thy wrongs. (Exit.)

Hum.—What shall I do? I have been beaten twice,
And Mistress Luce is gone. Help me, device:
Since my true love is gone, I never more,
Whilst I do live, upon the sky will pore;
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But in the dark will wear out my shoe-soles
In passion, in St. Faith's Church under Paul's. (Exit.)

Wife.—George, call Ralph hither; if you love me, call Ralph hither. I have the bravest thing for him to do, George; prithee call him quickly.

Cit.—Ralph! why, Ralph, boy!

Enter Ralph.

Ralph.—Here, sir.

Cit.—Come hither, Ralph; come to thy mistress, boy.

Wife.—Ralph, I would have thee call all the youths together in battle-ray, with drums, and guns, and flags, and march to Mile End in pompous fashion, and there exhort your soldiers to be merry and wise, and to keep their beards from burning, Ralph; and then skirmish, and let your flags fly, and cry, Kill, kill, kill! My husband shall lend you his jerkin, Ralph, and there's a scarf; for the rest, the house shall furnish you, and we'll pay for't: do it bravely, Ralph, and think before whom you perform, and what person you represent.

Ralph.—I warrant you, mistress, if I do it not, for the honor of the city and the credit of my master, let me never hope for freedom.

Wife.—'Tis well spoken, i'faith; go thy ways; thou art a spark indeed.

Cit.—Ralph, double your files bravely, Ralph.

Ralph.—I warrant you, sir. (Exit Ralph.)

Cit.—Let him look narrowly to his service, I shall take him else; I was there myself a pikeman once, in the hottest of the day, wench; had my feather shot sheer away, the fringe of my pike burnt off with powder, my pate broken with a scouring-stick, and yet I thank God I am here.

(Drum within.)

Wife.—Hark, George, the drums!

Cit.—Ran, tan, tan, tan, ran tan. Oh, wench, an' thou hadst but seen little Ned of Aldgate, drum Ned, how he made it roar again, and laid on like a tyrant, and then struck softly till the Ward came up, and then thundered again, and together we go: "Sa, sa, sa," bounce quoth the guns; "Courage, my

'hearts," quoth the captains; "St. George," quoth the pikemen; and withal here they lay, and there they lay; and yet for all this I am here, wench.

Wife.—Be thankful for it, George, for indeed 'tis wonderful.

Enter Ralph and his Company, with drums and colors.

Ralph.—March fair, my hearts; lieutenant, beat the rear up; ancient, let your colors fly; but have a great care of the butchers' hooks at Whitechapel, they have been the death of many a fair ancient. Open your filēs, that I may take a view both of your persons and munition. Sergeant, call a muster.

Sergeant.—A stand. William Hamerton, pewterer.

Hamerton.—Here, captain.

Ralph.—A croslet and a Spanish pike; 'tis well; can you shake it with a terror?

Ham.—I hope so, captain.

Ralph.—Charge upon me—'tis with the weakest. Put more strength, William Hamerton, more strength. As you were again; proceed, sergeant.

Serg.—George Green-goose, poulterer.

Green-goose.—Here.

Ralph.—Let me see your piece, neighbor Green-goose. When was she shot in?

Green.—An' like you, master captain, I made a shot even now, partly to scour her, and partly for audacity.

Ralph.—It should seem so, certainly, for her breath is yet inflamed; besides, there is a main fault in the touch-hole—it stinketh. And I tell you moreover, and believe it, ten such touch-holes would poison the army; get you a feather, neighbor, get you a feather, sweet oil and paper, and your piece may do well enough yet. Where's your powder?

Green.—Here.

Ralph.—What, in a paper? As I am a soldier and a gentleman, it craves a martial court: you ought to die for't. Where's your horn? Answer me to that.

Green.—An't like you, sir, I was oblivious.

Ralph.—It likes me not it should be so; 'tis a shame for you, and a scandal to all our neighbors, being a man of worth and estimation, to leave your horn behind you: I am afraid 'twill breed example. But let me tell you no more on't; stand till I view you all. What's become o' th' nose of your flask?

First Soldier.—Indeed, la' captain, 'twas blown away with powder.

Ralph.—Put on a new one at the city's charge. Where's the flint of this piece?

Second Soldier.—The drummer took it out to light tobacco.

Ralph.—'Tis a fault, my friend; put it in again. You want a nose, and you a flint; sergeant, take a note on't, for I mean to stop it in their pay. Remove and march; soft and fair, gentlemen, soft and fair: double your files; as you were; faces about. Now you with the sodden face, keep in there: look to your match, sirrah, it will be in your fellow's flask anon. So make a crescent now, advance your pikes, stand and give ear. Gentlemen, countrymen, friends and my fellow-soldiers, I have brought you this day from the shop of security and the counters of content, to measure out in these furious fields honor by the ell and prowess by the pound. Let it not, oh, let it not, I say, be told hereafter, the noble issue of this city fainted; but bear yourselves in this fair action like men, valiant men, and free men. Fear not the face of the enemy nor the noise of the guns; for believe me, brethren, the rude rumbling of a brewer's car is more terrible, of which you have a daily experience: neither let the stink of powder offend you, since a more valiant stink is always with you. To a resolved mind his home is everywhere. I speak not this to take away the hope of your return; for you shall see (I do not doubt it), and that very shortly, your loving wives again, and your sweet children, whose care doth bear you company in baskets. Remember, then, whose cause you have in hand, and like a sort of true-born scavengers, scour me this famous realm of enemies. I have no more to say but this: Stand to your tacklings, lads, and show to the world you can as well brandish a sword as shake an apron. St. George, and on, my hearts!

Omnes.—St. George! St. George!

(*Exeunt.*)

Wife.—"Twas well done, Ralph; I'll send thee a cold capon

affeld, and a bottle of March beer; and, it may be, come myself to see thee.

Cit.—Nell, the boy hath deceived me much; I did not think it had been in him. He has perform'd such a matter, wench, that, if I live, next year I'll have him captain of the Gallifoist, or I'll want my will.

Enter Old Merry-thought.

Old Merry-thought.—Yet, I thank God, I break not a wrinkle more than I had; not a stoop, boys. Care, live with cats; I defy thee! My heart is as sound as an oak; and though I want drink to wet my whistle, I can sing,

“Come no more there, boys; come no more there:

For we shall never, whilst we live, come any more there.”

Enter a boy with a coffin.

Boy.—God save you, sir.

Old Mer.—It's a brave boy. Canst thou sing?

Boy.—Yes, sir, I can sing, but 'tis not so necessary at this time.

Old Mer.—“Sing we, and chant it,
While love doth grant it.”

Boy.—Sir, sir, if you knew what I have brought you, you would have little list to sing.

Old Mer.—“Oh, the Mimon round,
Full long I have thee sought,
And now I have thee found,
And what hast thou here brought?”

Boy.—A coffin, sir, and your dead son Jasper in it.

Old Mer.—Dead!

“Why farewell he:
Thou wast a bonny boy,
And I did love thee.”

Enter Jasper.

Jasper.—Then I pray you, sir, do so still.

Old Mer.—Jasper's ghost!

“Thou art welcome from Stygian lake so soon,

Declare to me what wondrous things
In Pluto's court are done."

Jasp.—By my troth, sir, I ne'er came there; 'tis too hot for me, sir.

Old Mer.—A merry ghost, a very merry ghost.
"And where is your true love? Oh, where is yours?"

Jasp.—Marry, look you, sir. (Heaves up the coffin.)

Old Mer.—Ah ha! Art thou good at that, i'faith?

"With hey trixie terlerie-whiskin,
The world it runs on wheels;
When the young man's frisking,
Up goes the maiden's heels."

Mistress Merry-thought and Michael, within.

Mistress Merry-thought.—What, Mr. Merry-thought, will you not let us in? What do you think shall become of us?

Old Mer.—What voice is that, that calleth at our door?

Mist. Mer.—You know me well enough; I am sure I have not been such a stranger to you.

Old Mer.—"And some they whistled, and some they sung,
Hey down, down;
And some did loudly say,
Ever as the Lord Barnet's horn blew,
Away, Musgrave, away."

Mist. Mer.—You will not have us starve here, will you, Master Merry-thought?

Jasp.—Nay, good sir, be persuaded; she is my mother. If her offenses have been great against you, let your own love remember she is yours, and so forgive her.

Lucc.—Good Master Merry-thought, let me entreat you; I will not be denied.

Mist. Mer.—Why, Master Merry-thought, will you be a vexed thing still?

Old Mer.—Woman, I take you to my love again, but you shall sing before you enter; therefore dispatch your song, and so come in.

Mist. Mer.—Well, you must have your will, when all's done. Michael, what song canst thou sing, boy?

Michael.—I can sing none, forsooth, but "A Lady's Daughter of Paris," properly.

Mist. Mer.—(Song.) "It was a lady's daughter," etc.

Old Mer.—Come, you're welcome home again.

"If such danger be in playing,
And jest must to earnest turn,
You shall go no more a-Maying"——

Merchant.—(Within.) Are you within, Sir Master Merry-thought?

Jasp.—It is my master's voice, good sir; go hold him in talk while we convey ourselves into some inward room.

Old Mer.—What are you? Are you merry? You must be very merry if you enter.

Merch.—I am, sir.

Old Mer.—Sing, then.

Merch.—Nay, good sir, open to me.

Old Mer.—Sing, I say, or, by the merry heart, you come not in.

Merch.—Well, sir, I'll sing.

"Fortune my foe," etc.

Old Mer.—You are welcome, sir, you are welcome; you see your entertainment, pray you be merry.

Merch.—Oh, Master Merry-thought, I'm come to ask you

Forgiveness for the wrongs I offered you

And your most virtuous son; they're infinite,

Yet my contrition shall be more than they.

I do confess my hardness broke his heart,

For which just heav'n hath given me punishment

More than my age can carry; his wand'ring sprite,

Not yet at rest, pursues me everywhere,

Crying, I'll haunt thee for thy cruelty.

My daughter she is gone, I know not how,

Taken invisible, and whether living

Or in grave, 'tis yet uncertain to me.

Oh, Master Merry-thought, these are the weights

Will sink me to my grave. Forgive me, sir.

Old Mer.—Why, sir, I do forgive you, and be merry.
And if the wag in's lifetime play'd the knave,
Can you forgive him, too?

Merch.— With all my heart, sir.

Old Mer.—Speak it again, and heartily.

Merch.— I do, sir.

Now, by my soul, I do.

Old Mer.—"With that came out his paramour,
She was as white as the lily flower,
Hey troul, troly loly.
With that came out her own dear knight,
He was as true as ever did fight," etc.

Enter Luce and Jasper.

Sir, if you will forgive 'em, clap their hands together; there's no more to be said i' th' matter.

Merch.—I do, I do!

Cit.—I do not like this. Peace, boys; hear me, one of you. Everybody's part is come to an end but Ralph's and he's left out.

Boy.—"Tis long of yourself, sir; we have nothing to do with his part.

Cit.—Ralph, come away; make on him as you have done of the rest; boys, come.

Wife.—Now, good husband, let him come out and die.

Cit.—He shall, Nell; Ralph, come away quickly and die, boy.

Boy.—"Twill be very unfit he should die, sir, upon no occasion, and in a comedy, too.

Cit.—Take you no care for that, Sir Boy; is not his part at an end, think you, when he's dead? Come away, Ralph.

Enter Ralph with a forked arrow through his head.

Ralph.—When I was mortal, this my costive corpse
Did lap up figs and raisins in the Strand,
Where sitting, I espied a lovely dame,
Whose master wrought with lingel and with awl,

And underground he vampéd many a boot.
Straight did her love prick forth me, tender sprig,
To follow feats of arms in warlike wise,
Through Waltham Desert; where I did perform
Many achievements, and did lay on ground
Huge Barbaroso, that insulting giant,
And all his captives soon set at liberty.
Then honor prick'd me from my native soil
Into Moldavia, where I gain'd the love
Of Pompiana, his beloved daughter;
But yet prov'd constant to the black-thumbed maid
Susan, and scornéd Pompiana's love.
Yet liberal I was, and gave her pins,
And money for her father's officers.
I then returnéd home, and thrust myself
In action, and by all men chosen was
The Lord of May, where I did flourish it
With scarfs and rings, and posy in my hand.
After this action I preferred was,
And chosen City Captain at Mile End,
With hat and feather, and with leading staff,
And train'd my men, and brought them all off clean,
Save one man, that berayed him with the noise.
But all these things I, Ralph, did undertake
Only for my belovéd Susan's sake.
Then coming home, and sitting in my shop,
With apron blue, Death came unto my stall
To cheapen aquavitæ, but ere I
Could take the bottle down and fill a taste,
Death caught a pound of pepper in his hand,
And sprinkled all my face and body o'er,
And in an instant vanishéd away.

Cit.—'Tis a pretty fiction, i'faith.

Ralph.—Then took I up my bow and shaft in hand,
And walkéd in Moorfields to cool myself;
But there grim, cruel Death met me again,
And shot his forkéd arrow through my head,
And now I faint; therefore be warn'd by me,
My fellows every one, of forkéd heads.
Farewell, all you good boys in merry London,

Ne'er shall we more upon Shrove Tuesday meet,
 And pluck down houses of iniquity.
 My pain increaseth: I shall never more
 When clubs are cried be brisk upon my legs,
 Nor daub a satin gown with rotten eggs.
 Set up a stake. oh, never more I shall;
 I die! Fly, fly, my soul, to Grocers Hall! Oh, oh, oh, etc

Wife.—Well said, Ralph; do your obeisance to the gentlemen, and go your ways. Well said, Ralph. (Exit Ralph.)

Old Mer.—Methinks all we, thus kindly and unexpectedly reconciled, should not part without a song.

Merch.—A good motion.

Old Mer.—Strike up, then.

SONG.

Better music ne'er was known
 Than a choir of hearts in one.
 Let each other, that hath been
 Troubled with the gall or spleen,
 Learn of us to keep his brow
 Smooth and plain, as yours are now.
 Sing though before the hour of dying,
 He shall rise, and then be crying
 Heigho! 'tis naught but mirth
 That keeps the body from the earth.

(Exeunt omnes.)

EPILOGUE.

Cit.—Come, Nell, shall we go? The play's done.

Wife.—Nay, by my faith, George, I have more manners than so. I'll speak to these gentlemen first. I thank you all, gentlemen, for your patience and countenance to Ralph, a poor fatherless child, and if I may see you at my house, it should go hard but I would have a pottle of wine and a pipe of tobacco for you; for truly I hope you like the youth, but I would be glad to know the truth. I refer it to your own discretions whether you will applaud him or no, for I will wink, and whilst, you shall do what you will. I thank you with all my heart. God give you good-night. Come, George.

DOUGLAS

A TRAGEDY

BY THE

REV. JOHN HOME, D.D.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

LORD RANDOLPH.

GLENALVON.

OLD NORVAL.

YOUNG NORVAL.

OFFICER.

SERVANT.

LADY RANDOLPH.

ANNA.

PRELUDE.

The tragedy of *Douglas* was suggested to Home through hearing a lady sing the ballad of Gil Morice. It was for the author a five years' task, and finally was rejected by Garrick, to whom it was submitted for his opinion. It was, however, brought out in Edinburgh, where it scored a remarkable success. Home was tried and suspended by the Presbyterian Synod of the Kirk of Scotland for having written "a profane stage play," though one of the most natural and powerful dramas of the period. It was afterward enthusiastically received in England, and is perhaps the nearest approach to the tragedy of the Romantic school that Britain has produced, except for a few of Tennyson's and Byron's plays. It is, however, rather a dramatic poem than a drama, and hence rather fitted for the study than the stage.

ACT I.

The court of a castle surrounded with woods.

Enter Lady Randolph.

Lady Randolph.—Ye woods and wilds, whose melancholy gloom
Accords with my soul's sadness, and draws forth
The voice of sorrow from my bursting heart,
Farewell a while; I will not leave you long;

For in your shades I deem some spirit dwells,
Who from the chiding stream, or groaning oak,
Still hears, and answers to Matilda's moan.
O Douglas! Douglas! if departed ghosts
Are e'er permitted to review this world,
Within the circle of that wood thou art,
And with the passion of immortals hear'st
My lamentation: hear'st thy wretched wife
Weep for her husband slain, her infant lost.
My brother's timeless death I seem to mourn;
Who perish'd with thee on this fatal day.
To thee I lift my voice; to thee address
The plaint which mortal ear has never heard.
O disregard me not; tho' I am call'd
Another's now, my heart is wholly thine.
Incapable of change, affection lies
Buried, my Douglas, in thy bloody grave.
But Randolph comes, whom fate has made my Lord,
To chide my anguish, and defraud the dead.

Enter Lord Randolph.

Lord Randolph.—Again these weeds of woe! say, dost thou
well

To feed a passion which consumes thy life?
The living claim some duty; vainly thou
Bestow'st thy cares upon the silent dead.

Lady Rand.—Silent, alas! is he for whom I mourn:
Childless, without memorial of his name,
He only now in my remembrance lives.
This fatal day stirs my time-settled sorrow,
Troubles afresh the fountain of my heart.

Lord Rand.—When was it pure of sadness! These black weeds
Express the wonted color of thy mind,
For ever dark and dismal. Seven long years
Are pass'd, since we were join'd by sacred ties:
Clouds all the while have hung upon thy brow,
Nor broke, nor parted by one gleam of joy.
Time, that wears out the trace of deepest anguish,
As the sea smooths the prints made in the sand,
Has passed o'er thee in vain.

Lady Rand.—If time to come
Should prove as ineffectual, yet, my Lord,
Thou canst not blame me. When our Scottish youth
Vied with each other for my luckless love,
Oft I besought them, I implor'd them all
Not to assail me with my father's aid,
Nor blend their better destiny with mine.
For melancholy had congeal'd my blood,
And froze affection in my chilly breast.
At last my Sire, rous'd with the base attempt
To force me from him, which thou rend'red'st vain,
To his own daughter bow'd his hoary head,
Besought me to commiserate his age,
And vow'd he should not, could not die in peace,
Unless he saw me wedded, and secur'd
From violence and outrage. Then, my Lord!
In my extreme distress I call'd on thee,
Thee I bespake, profess'd my strong desire
To lead a single, solitary life,
And begg'd thy Nobleness not to demand
Her for a wife whose heart was dead to love.
How thou persisted'st after this, thou know'st.
And must confess that I am not unjust,
Nor more to thee than to myself injurious.

Lord Rand.—That I confess; yet ever must regret
The grief I cannot cure. Would thou wert not
Compos'd of grief and tenderness alone,
But hadst a spark of other passions in thee,
Pride, anger, vanity, the strong desire
Of admiration, dear to woman-kind;
These might contend with, and allay thy grief,
As meeting tides and currents smooth our firth.

Lady Rand.—To such a cause the human mind oft owes
Its transient calm, a calm I envy not.

Lord Rand.—Sure thou art not the daughter of Sir Malcolm:
Strong was his rage, eternal his resentment:
For when thy brother fell, he smil'd to hear
That Douglas' son in the same field was slain.

Lady Rand.—Oh! rake not up the ashes of my fathers.
Implacable resentment was their crime,

And grievous has the expiation been.
Contending with the Douglas, gallant lives
Of either house were lost; my ancestors
Compell'd, at last, to leave their ancient seat
On Tiviot's pleasant banks; and now, of them
No heir is left. Had they not been so stern,
I had not been the last of all my race.

Lord Rand.—Thy grief wrests to its purposes my words
I never ask'd of thee that ardent love,
Which in the breasts of fancy's children burns.
Decent affection, and complacent kindness
Were all I wish'd for; but I wish'd in vain.
Hence with the less regret my eyes behold
The storm of war that gathers o'er this land.
If I should perish by the Danish sword,
Matilda would not shed one tear the more.

Lady Rand.—Thou dost not think so: woeful as I am,
I love thy merit, and esteem thy virtues.
But whither go'st thou now?

Lord Rand.—Straight to the camp,
Where every warrior on the tip-toe stands
Of expectation, and impatient asks
Each who arrives, if he is come to tell
The Danes are landed.

Lady Rand.—O, may adverse winds,
Far from the coast of Scotland, drive their fleet!
And every soldier of both hosts return
In peace and safety to his pleasant home!

Lord Rand.—Thou speak'st a woman's, hear a warrior's wish:
Right from their native land, the stormy north,
May the wind blow, till every keel is fix'd
Immovable in Caledonia's strand!
Then shall our foes repent their bold invasion,
And roving armies shun the fatal shore.

Lady Rand.—War I detest: but war with foreign foes,
Whose manners, language, and whose looks are strange,
Is not so horrid, nor to me so hateful,
As that with which our neighbors oft we wage.
A river here, there an ideal line,

By fancy drawn, divides the sister kingdoms.
On each side dwells a people similar,
As twins are to each other; valiant both;
Both for their valor famous through the world.
Yet will they not unite their kindred arms,
And, if they must have war, wage distant war,
But with each other fight in cruel conflict.
Gallant in strife, and noble in their ire,
The battle is their pastime. They go forth
Gay in the morning, as to summer sport;
When ev'ning comes, the glory of the morn,
The youthful warrior is a clod of clay.
Thus fall the prime of either hapless land;
And such the fruit of Scotch and English wars.

Lord Rand.—I'll hear no more: this melody would make
A soldier drop his sword, and doff his arms,
Sit down and weep the conquests he has made;
Yea, (like a monk,) sing rest and peace in heaven
To souls of warriors in their battles slain.
Lady, farewell: I leave thee not alone;
Yonder comes one whose love makes duty light. (Exit.)

Enter Anna.

Anna.—Forgive the rashness of your Anna's love:
Urg'd by affection, I have thus presum'd
To interrupt your solitary thoughts;
And warn you of the hours that you neglect,
And lose in sadness.

Lady Rand.—So to lose my hours
Is all the use I wish to make of time.

Anna.—To blame thee, Lady, suits not with my state,
But sure I am, since death first prey'd on man,
Never did sister thus a brother mourn.
What had your sorrows been if you had lost,
In early youth, the husband of your heart?

Lady Rand.—Oh!

Anna.—Have I distress'd you with officious love,
And ill-tim'd mention of your brother's fate?
Forgive me, Lady: humble tho' I am,

The mind I bear partakes not of my fortune:
So fervently I love you, that to dry
These piteous tears, I'd throw my life away.

Lady Rand.—What power directed thy unconscious tongue
To speak as thou hast done? to name——

Anna.—I know not:
But since my words have made my mistress tremble
I will speak so no more; but silent mix
My tears with her's.

Lady Rand.—No, thou shalt not be silent.
I'll trust thy faithful love, and thou shalt be
Henceforth th' instructed partner of my woes.
But what avails it? Can thy feeble pity
Roll back the flood of never-ebbing time?
Compel the earth and ocean to give up
Their dead alive?

Anna.—What means my noble mistress?

Lady Rand.—Didst thou not ask what had my sorrows
been?——

If I in early youth had lost a husband?——
In the cold bosom of the earth is lodg'd,
Mangled with wounds, the husband of my youth;
And in some cavern of the ocean lies
My child and his.——

Anna.—O! Lady, most rever'd!
The tale wrapt up in your amazing words
Deign to unfold.

Lady Rand.—Alas, an ancient feud,
Hereditary evil, was the source
Of my misfortunes. Ruling fate decreed,
That my brave brother should in battle save
The life of Douglas' son, our house's foe:
The youthful warriors vow'd eternal friendship.
To see the vaunted sister of his friend
Impatient Douglas to Balarmo came,
Under a borrow'd name.—My heart he gain'd;
Nor did I long refuse the hand he begg'd:
My brother's presence authoriz'd our marriage.
Three weeks, three little weeks, with wings of down,

Had o'er us flown, when my lov'd Lord was called
 To fight his father's battles; and with him,
 In spite of all my tears, did Malcolm go.
 Scarce were they gone, when my stern Sire was told
 That the false stranger was Lord Douglas' son.
 Frantic with rage, the Baron drew his sword,
 And question'd me. Alone, forsaken, faint,
 Kneeling beneath his sword, fault'ring I took
 An oath equivocal, that I ne'er would
 Wed one of Douglas' name. Sincerity,
 Thou first of virtues, let no mortal leave
 Thy onward path! altho' the earth should gap,
 And from the gulf of hell destruction cry
 To take dissimulation's winding way.

Anna.—Alas! how few of woman's fearful kind
 Durst own a truth so hardy!

Lady Rand.—The first truth
 Is easiest to avow. This moral learn,
 This precious moral—from my tragic tale—
 In a few days the dreadful tidings came
 That Douglas and my brother both were slain.
 My lord! my life! my husband!—Mighty heaven!
 What had I done to merit such affliction?

Anna.—My dearest Lady! many a tale of tears
 I've listen'd to; but never did I hear
 A tale so sad as this.

Lady Rand.—In the first days
 Of my distracting grief, I found myself—
 As woman wish to be who love their lords.
 But who durst tell my father? The good priest
 Who join'd our hands, my brother's ancient tutor,
 With his lov'd Malcolm in the battle fell:
 They two alone were privy to the marriage.
 On silence and concealment I resolved,
 Till time should make my father's fortune mine.
 That very night on which my son was born,
 My nurse, the only confidant I had,
 Set out with him to reach her sister's house:
 But nurse, nor infant, have I ever seen

Or heard of, Anna, since that fatal hour.
My murder'd child!—had thy fond mother fear'd
The loss of thee, she had loud fame defy'd,
Despis'd her father's rage, her father's grief,
And wander'd with thee thro' the scorning world.

Anna.—Not seen nor heard of! then perhaps he lives.

Lady Rand.—No. It was dark December: wind and rain
Had beat all night. Across the Carron lay
The destin'd road; and in its swelling flood
My faithful servant perish'd with my child.
O hapless son! of a most hapless sire!—
But they are both at rest; and I alone
Dwell in this world of woe, condemn'd to walk,
Like a guilt-troubl'd ghost, my painful rounds:
Nor has spiteful fate permitted me
The comfort of a solitary sorrow.
Tho' dead to love, I was compell'd to wed
Randolph, who snatch'd me from a villain's arms;
And Randolph now possesses the domains
That by Sir Malcolm's death on me devolv'd;
Domains, that should to Douglas' son have giv'n
A Baron's title, and a Baron's power.
Such were my soothing thoughts, while I bewail'd
The slaughter'd father of a son unborn.
And when that son came, like a ray from heav'n
Which shines and disappears; alas! my child!
How long did thy fond mother grasp the hope
Of having thee, she knew not how, restor'd.
Year after year hath worn her hope away;
But left still undiminish'd her desire.

Anna.—The hand, that spins th' uneven thread of life,
May smooth the length that's yet to come of yours.

Lady Rand.—Not in this world: I have consider'd well
Its various evils, and on whom they fall.
Alas! how oft does goodness wound itself,
And sweet affection prove the spring of woe!
O! had I died when my lov'd husband fell!
Had some good angel op'd to me the book
Of providence, and let me read my life,

My heart had broke when I beheld the sum
Of ills, which one by one I have endur'd.

Anna.—That power, whose ministers good angels are,
Hath shut the book in mercy to mankind.
But we must leave this theme: Glenalvon comes.
I saw him bend on you his thoughtful eyes,
And hitherwards he slowly stalks his way.

Lady Rand.—I will avoid him. An ungracious person
Is doubly irksome in an hour like this.

Anna.—Why speaks my Lady thus of Randolph's heir?

Lady Rand.—Because he's not the heir of Randolph's virtues.
Subtle and shrewd, he offers to mankind
An artificial image of himself:
And he with ease can vary to the taste
Of different men, its features. Self-deny'd,
And master of his appetites he seems:
But his fierce nature, like a fox chain'd up,
Watches to seize unseen the wish'd-for prey.
Never were vice and virtue pois'd so ill,
As in Glenalvon's unrelenting mind.
Yet is he brave and politic in war,
And stands aloft in these unruly times.
Why I describe him thus I'll tell hereafter:
Stay and detain him till I reach the castle. (Exit.)

Anna.—O happiness! where art thou to be found?
I see thou dwellest not with birth and beauty,
Tho' grac'd with grandeur, and in wealth array'd:
Nor dost thou, it would seem, with virtue dwell;
Else had this gentle Lady miss'd thee not.

Enter Glenalvon.

Glenalvon.—What dost thou muse on, meditating maid?
Like some entranc'd and visionary seer
On earth thou stand'st, thy thoughts ascend to heaven.

Anna.—Would that I were, e'en as thou say'st, a seer,
To have my doubts by heav'nly vision clear'd!

Glen.—What dost thou doubt of? what hast thou to do
With subjects intricate? Thy youth, thy beauty,

Cannot be question'd: think of these good gifts,
And then thy contemplations will be pleasing.

Anna.—Let women view yon monuments of woe,
Then boast of beauty: who so fair as she?
But I must follow; this revolving day
Awakes the memory of her ancient woes. (Exit.)

Glen.—So! Lady Randolph shuns me! by and by
I'll woo her as the lion woos his brides.
The deed's a-doing now, that makes me lord
Of these rich valleys, and a chief of power.
The season is most apt; my sounding steps
Will not be heard amidst the din of arms.
Randolph has liv'd too long; his better fate
Had the ascendant once, and kept me down:
When I had seiz'd the dame, by chance he came,
Rescu'd, and had the lady for his labor;
I 'scap'd unknown: a slender consolation!
Heaven is my witness that I do not love
To sow in peril, and let others reap
The jocund harvest. Yet I am not safe:
By love, or something like it, stung, inflam'd,
Madly I blabb'd my passion to his wife,
And she has threaten'd to acquaint him of it.
The way of woman's will I do not know:
But well I know the baron's wrath is deadly.
I will not live in fear; the man I dread
Is as a Dane to me; he is the man
Who stands betwixt me and my chief desire.
No bar but he: she has no kinsman near;
No brother in his sister's quarrel bold,
And for the righteous cause, a stranger's cause,
I know no chief that will defy Glenalvon.

ACT II.

A court, etc.

Stranger.—(Within.) Oh, mercy, mercy!

Enter servants and a Stranger at one door, and Lady Randolph and Anna at another.

Lady Randolph.—What means this clamor? Stranger, speak secure;

Hast thou been wronged? have these rude men presum'd
To vex the weary traveller on his way?

First Servant.—By us no stranger ever suffer'd wrong:

This man with outcry wild has call'd us forth;
So sore afraid he cannot speak his fears.

Enter Lord Randolph and Norval, with their swords drawn and bloody.

Lady Rand.—Not vain the stranger's fears! how fares my lord?

Lord Randolph.—That it fares well, thanks to this gallant youth,

Whose valor sav'd me from a wretched death!
As down the winding dale I walk'd alone,
At the crossway four armed men attack'd me:
Rovers, I judge, from the licentious camp,
Who would have quickly laid Lord Randolph low,
Had not this brave and generous stranger come,
Like my good angel, in the hour of fate,
And, mocking danger, made my foes his own.
They turn'd upon him: but his active arm
Struck to the ground, from whence they rose no more,
The fiercest two; the others fled amain,
And left him master of the bloody field.
Speak, Lady Randolph: upon beauty's tongue
Dwell accents pleasing to the brave and bold.
Speak, noble dame, and thank him for thy lord.

Lady Rand.—My lord, I cannot speak what now I feel.
My heart o'erflows with gratitude to heav'n,
And to this noble youth, who, all unknown
To you and yours, deliberated not,
Nor paus'd at peril, but, humanely brave,
Fought on your side, against such fearful odds.
Have you yet learn'd of him, whom we should thank?
Whom call the savior of Lord Randolph's life?

Lord Rand.—I ask'd that question, and he answer'd not:
But I must know who my deliverer is. (To the stranger.)

Norval.—A low-born man, of parentage obscure,
Who naught can boast but his desire to be
A soldier, and to gain a name in arms.

Lord Rand.—Whoe'er thou art, thy spirit is ennobled
By the great King of kings! thou art ordain'd
And stamp'd a hero by the sovereign hand
Of nature! blush not, flower of modesty
As well as valor, to declare thy birth.

Norv.—My name is Norval: on the Grampian hills
My father feeds his flocks; a frugal swain,
Whose constant cares were to increase his store,
And keep his only son, myself, at home.
For I had heard of battles, and I long'd
To follow to the field some warlike lord:
And heaven soon granted what my sire denied.
This moon which rose last night, round as my shield,
Had not yet fill'd her horns, when, by her light,
A band of fierce barbarians, from the hills,
Rush'd like a torrent down upon the vale,
Sweeping our flocks and herds. The shepherds fled
For safety and for succor. I alone,
With bended bow, and quiver full of arrows,
Hover'd about the enemy, and mark'd
The road he took, then hasted to my friends;
Whom, with a troop of fifty chosen men,
I met advancing. The pursuit I led,
Till we o'ertook the spoil-encumber'd foe.
We fought and conquer'd. Ere a sword was drawn
An arrow from my bow had pierc'd their chief,
Who wore that day the arms which now I wear.
Returning home in triumph, I disdain'd
The shepherd's slothful life: and having heard
That our good king had summon'd his bold peers
To lead their warriors to the Carron side,
I left my father's house, and took with me
A chosen servant to conduct my steps;
Yon trembling coward, who forsook his master,

Journeying with this intent, I passed these towers,
And, heaven-directed, came this day to do
The happy deed that gilds my humble name.

Lord Rand.—He is as wise as brave. Was ever tale
With such a gallant modesty rehears'd?
My brave deliverer! thou shalt enter now
A nobler list, and in a monarch's fight
Contend with princes for the prize of fame.
I will present thee to our Scottish king,
Whose valiant spirit ever valor lov'd.
Ha! my Matilda! wherefore starts that tear?

Lady Rand.—I cannot say: for various affections,
And strangely mingled, in my bosom swell;
Yet each of them may well command a tear.
I joy that thou art safe, and I admire
Him and his fortunes who hath wrought thy safety:
Yea, as my mind predicts, with thine his own.
Obscure and friendless, he the army fought,
Bent upon peril, in the range of death
Resolv'd to hunt for fame, and with his sword
To gain distinction which his birth denied.
In this attempt unknown he might have perish'd,
And gain'd, with all his valor, but oblivion.
Now grac'd by thee, his virtue serves no more
Beneath despair. The soldier now of hope
He stands conspicuous; fame and great renown
Are brought within the compass of his sword.
On this my mind reflected while you spoke,
And bless'd the wonder-working hand of heaven.

Lord Rand.—Pious and grateful ever are thy thoughts!
My deeds shall follow where thou point'st the way.
Next to myself, and equal to Glenalvon,
In honor and command shall Norval be.

Norv.—I know not how to thank you. Rude I am
In speech and manners: never till this hour
Stood I in such a presence: yet, my lord,
There's something in my breast which makes me bold
To say, that Norval ne'er will shame thy favor.

Lady Rand.—I will be sworn thou wilt not. Thou shalt be
My knight; and ever, as thou didst to-day,
With happy valor guard the life of Randolph.

Lord Rand.—Well hast thou spoke. Let me forbid reply.

(To Norval.)

We are thy debtors still; thy high desert
O'ertops our gratitude. I must proceed,
As was at first intended, to the camp.
Some of my train, I see, are speeding hither,
Impatient, doubtless, of their lord's delay.
Go with me, Norval, and thine eyes shall see
The chosen warriors of thy native land,
Who languish for the fight, and beat the air
With brandish'd swords.

Norv.—Let us be gone, my lord.

Lord Rand.—(To Lady Randolph.) About the time that the declining sun

Shall his broad orbit o'er yon hills suspend,
Expect us to return. This night once more
Within these walls I rest; my tent I pitch
To-morrow in the field. Prepare the feast.
Free is his heart who for his country fights;
He in the eve of battle may resign
Himself to social pleasure; sweetest then,
When danger to a soldier's soul endears
The human joy that never may return.

(Exeunt Lord Randolph and Norval.)

Lady Rand.—His parting words have struck a fatal truth.
O Douglas! Douglas! tender was the time
When we two parted, ne'er to meet again!
How many years of anguish and despair
Has heav'n annex'd to those swift-passing hours
Of love and fondness! Then my bosom's flame
Oft, as blown back by the rude breath of fear,
Return'd, and with redoubled ardor blaz'd.

Anna.—May gracious heav'n pour the sweet balm of peace
Into the wounds that fester in your breast!
For earthly consolation cannot cure them.

Lady Rand.—One only cure can heaven itself bestow:
A grave—that bed in which the weary rest.
Wretch that I am! Alas! why am I so?
At every happy parent I repine!
How blest the mother of young gallant Norval!
She for a living husband bore her pains,
And heard him bless her when a man was born.
She nurs'd her smiling infant on her breast;
Tended the child, and rear'd the pleasing boy:
She, with affection's triumph, saw the youth
In grace and comeliness surpass his peers:
While I to a dead husband bore a son,
And to the roaring waters gave my child.

Anna.—Alas! alas! why will you thus resume
Your grief afresh? I thought that gallant youth
Would for a while have won you from your woe.
On him intent you gazed, with a look
Much more delighted than your pensive eye
Has deign'd on other objects to bestow.

Lady Rand.—Delighted, say'st thou? Oh! even there mine eye
Found fuel for my life-consuming sorrow.
I thought that, had the son of Douglas liv'd,
He might have been like this young gallant stranger,
And pair'd with him in features and in shape;
In all endowments, as in years, I deem,
My boy with blooming Norval might have number'd.
While thus I mus'd, a spark from fancy fell
On my sad heart, and kindled up a fondness
For this young stranger, wand'ring from his home,
And like an orphan cast upon my care.
I will protect thee (said I to myself)
With all my power, and grace with all my favor.

Anna.—Sure heav'n will bless so generous a resolve.
You must, my noble dame, exert your power:
You must awake: devices will be fram'd,
And arrows pointed at the breast of Norval.

Lady Rand.—Glenalvon's false and crafty head will work
Against a rival in his kinsman's love,
If I deter him not: I only can.

Bold as he is, Glenalvon will beware
 How he pulls down the fabric that I raise.
 I'll be the artist of young Norval's fortune.
 'Tis pleasing to admire! most apt was I
 To this affection in my better days;
 Tho' now I seem to you shrunk up, retir'd
 Within the narrow compass of my woe.
 Have you not sometimes seen an early flower
 Open its bud, and spread its silken leaves,
 To catch sweet airs, and odors to bestow;
 Then, by the keen blast nipp'd, pull in its leaves,
 And, tho' still living, die to scent and beauty?
 Emblem of me: affliction, like a storm,
 Hath kill'd the forward blossom of my heart.

Enter Glenalvon.

Glenalvon.—Where is my dearest kinsman, noble Randolph?

Lady Rand.—Have you not heard, Glenalvon, of the base——

Glen.—I have; and that the villains may not 'scape,
 With a strong band I have begirt the wood.
 If they lurk there, alive they shall be taken,
 And torture force from them th' important secret,
 Whether some foe of Randolph hir'd their swords,
 Or if——

Lady Rand.—That care becomes a kinsman's love.
 I have a counsel for Glenalvon's ear. (Exit Anna.)

Glen.—To him your counsels always are commands.

Lady Rand.—I have not found so: thou art known to me.

Glen.—Known!

Lady Rand.—And most certain is my cause of knowledge.

Glen.—What do you know? By heav'n
 You much amaze me. No created being,
 Yourself except, durst thus accost Glenalvon.

Lady Rand.—Is guilt so bold! and dost thou make a merit
 Of thy pretended meekness! This to me,
 Who, with a gentleness which duty blames,
 Have hitherto conceal'd what, if divulg'd,
 Would make thee nothing; or, what's worse than that,

An outcast beggar, and unpitied, too!
For mortals shudder at a crime like thine.

Glen.—Thy virtue awes me. First of womankind!
Permit me yet to say, that the fond man
Whom love transports beyond strict virtue's bounds,
If he is brought by love to misery,
In fortune ruin'd, as in mind forlorn,
Unpitied cannot be. Pity's the alms
Which on such beggars freely is bestow'd:
For mortals know that love is still their lord,
And o'er their vain resolves advances still:
As fire, when kindled by our shepherds, moves
Thro' the dry heath against the fanning wind.

Lady Rand.—Reserve these accents for some other ear:
To love's apology I listen not.
Mark thou my words; for it is meet thou should'st.
His brave deliverer Randolph here retains.
Perhaps his presence may not please thee well;
But, at thy peril, practice aught against him:
Let not thy jealousy attempt to shake
And loosen the good root he has in Randolph;
Whose favorites, I know, thou hast supplanted.
Thou look'st at me as if thou fain would'st pry
Into my heart. 'Tis open as my speech.
I give this early caution, and put on
The curb before thy temper breaks away.
The friendless stranger my protection claims:
His friend I am, and be not thou his foe. (Exit.)

Glen.—Child that I was, to start at my own shadow,
And be the shallow fool of coward conscience!
I am not what I have been; what I should be.
The darts of destiny have almost pierc'd
My marble heart. Had I one grain of faith
In holy legends and religious tales,
I should conclude there was an arm above,
That fought against me, and malignant turn'd,
To catch myself, the subtle snare I set.
Why, rape and murder are not simple means!
Th' imperfect rape to Randolph gave a spouse;

And the intended murder introduc'd
 A favorite to hide the sun from me;
 And, worst of all, a rival. Burning hell!
 This were thy centre, if I thought she lov'd him!
 'Tis certain she contemns me! nay, commands me,
 And waves the flag of her displeasure o'er me,
 In his behalf. And shall I thus be brav'd?
 Curb'd, as she calls it, by dame chastity?
 Infernal fiends, if any fiends there are
 More fierce than hate, ambition and revenge,
 Rise up and fill thy bosom with your fires
 And policy remorseless! Chance may spoil
 A single aim; but perseverance must
 Prosper at last. For chance and fate are words
 Persistent wisdom is the fate of man.
 Darkly a project peers upon my mind,
 Like the red moon when rising in the east,
 Cross'd and divided by strange color'd clouds.
 I'll seek the slave who came with Norval hither,
 And for his cowardice was spurned from him.
 I've known a follower's rankled bosom breed
 Venom most fatal to his heedless Lord. (Exit.)

ACT III.

A court, etc., as before.

Enter Anna.

Anna.—Thy vassals, Grief! great nature's order break,
 And change the noontide to the midnight hour.
 While Lady Randolph sleeps, I will walk forth,
 And taste the air that breathes on yonder bank.
 Sweet may her slumbers be! Ye ministers
 Of gracious heaven who love the human race,
 Angels and seraphs who delight in goodness!
 Forsake your skies, and to her couch descend!
 There from her fancy chase those dismal forms
 That haunt her waking; her sad spirit charm
 With images celestial, such as please
 The bless'd above upon their golden beds.

Enter Servant.

Servant.—One of the vile assassins is secur'd.
We found the villain lurking in the wood:
With dreadful imprecations he denies
All knowledge of the crime. But this is not
His first essay: these jewels were conceal'd
In the most secret places of his garment;
Belike the spoils of some that he has murder'd.

Anna.—Let me look on them. Ha! here is a heart,
The chosen crest of Douglas' valiant name!
These are no vulgar jewels. Guard the wretch.
(Exit Anna.)

Enter Servants with the Prisoner.

Prisoner.—I know no more than does the child unborn
Of what you charge me with.

First Servant.—You say so, sir!
But torture soon shall make you speak the truth.
Behold the lady of Lord Randolph comes:
Prepare yourself to meet her just revenge.

Enter Lady Randolph and Anna.

Anna.—Summon your utmost fortitude before
You speak with him. Your dignity, your fame,
Are now at stake. Think of the fatal secret
Which in a moment from your lips may fly.

Lady Randolph.—Thou shalt behold me, with a desp'rate heart,
Hear how my infant perish'd. See, he kneels.

(The prisoner kneels.)

Pris.—Heav'n bless that countenance, so sweet and mild!
A judge like thee makes innocence more bold.
Oh, save me, lady, from these cruel men
Who have attack'd and seiz'd me; who accuse
Me of intended murder. As I hope
For mercy at the judgment seat of heav'n,
The tender lamb, that never nipp'd the grass,
Is not more innocent than I of murder.

Lady Rand.—Of this man's guilt what proof can ye produce?

First Serv.—We found him lurking in the hollow Glynn.
 When view'd and call'd upon, amaz'd he fled.
 We overtook him, and inquir'd from whence
 And what he was; he said he came from far,
 And was upon his journey to the camp.
 Not satisfied with this, we search'd his clothes,
 And found these jewels, whose rich value plead
 Most powerfully against him. Hard he seems,
 And old in villainy. Permit us try
 His stubbornness against the torture's force.

Pris.—Oh, gentle lady, by your lord's dear life!
 Which these weak hands, I swear, did ne'er assail;
 And by your children's welfare, spare my age!
 Let not the iron tear my ancient joints,
 And my gray hairs bring to the grave with pain.

Lady Rand.—Account for these: thine own they cannot be:
 For these, I say: be steadfast to the truth;
 Detected falsehood is most certain death.

(Anna removes the servants, and returns.)

Pris.—Alas! I'm sore beset! let never man,
 For sake of lucre, sin against his soul!
 Eternal justice is in this most just!
 I, guiltless now, must former guilt reveal.

Lady Rand.—Oh! Anna, hear!—once more I charge thee speak
 The truth direct: for these to me foretell
 And certify a part of thy narration;
 With which if the remainder tallies not,
 An instant and a dreadful death abides thee.

Pris.—Then, thus abjur'd, I'll speak to thee as just
 As if you were the minister of heaven,
 Sent down to search the secret sins of men.
 Some eighteen years ago, I rented land
 Of brave Sir Malcolm, then Balarmo's lord;
 But falling to decay, his servants seiz'd
 All that I had, and then turn'd me and mine
 (Four helpless infants and their weeping mother)
 Out to the mercy of the winter winds.
 A little hovel by the river's side
 Receiv'd us: there hard labor, and the skill

In fishing, which was formerly my sport,
 Supported life. While thus we poorly liv'd,
 One stormy night, as I remember well,
 The wind and rain beat hard upon our roof:
 Red came the river down, and loud and oft
 The angry spirit of the water shriek'd.
 At the dead hour of night was heard the cry
 Of one in jeopardy. I rose, and ran
 To where the circling eddy of a pool,
 Beneath the ford, us'd oft to bring within
 My reach whatever floating thing the stream
 Had caught. The voice was ceas'd; the person lost.
 But looking sad and earnest on the waters,
 By the moon's light I saw, whirl'd round and round,
 A basket: soon I drew it to the bank,
 And nestled curious there an infant lay.

Lady Rand.—Was he alive?

Pris.—He was.

Lady Rand.—Inhuman that thou art!

How could'st thou kill what waves and tempests spar'd?

Pris.—I am not so inhuman.

Lady Rand.—Didst thou not?

Anna.—My noble mistress, you are mov'd too much:

This man has not the aspect of stern murder:
 Let him go on, and you, I hope, will hear
 Good tidings of your kinsman's long-lost child.

Pris.—The needy man, who has known better days,
 One whom distress has spited at the world,
 Is he whom tempting fiends would pitch upon
 To do such deeds as make the prosperous men
 Lift up their hands and wonder who could do them.
 And such a man was I; a man declin'd,
 Who saw no end of black adversity:
 Yet, for the wealth of kingdoms, I would not
 Have touch'd that infant with a hand of harm.

Lady Rand.—Ha! dost thou say so? Then perhaps he lives!

Pris.—Not many days ago he was alive.

Lady Rand.—O Heav'nly Pow'r! Did he, then, die so lately?

Pris.—I did not say he died; I hope he lives.

Not many days ago these eyes beheld
Him, flourishing in youth, and health, and beauty.

Lady Rand.—Where is he now?

Pris.—Alas! I know not where.

Lady Rand.—Oh! fate, I fear thee still. Thou riddler, speak
Direct and clear; else I will search thy soul.

Anna.—Permit me, ever-honor'd! Keen impatience,
Tho' hard to be restrain'd, defeats itself.

Lady Rand.—Pursue thy story with a faithful tongue,
To the last hour that thou didst keep the child.

Pris.—Fear not my faith, tho' I must speak my shame.

Within the cradle, where the infant lay,
Was stow'd a mighty store of gold and jewels:
Tempted by which, we did resolve to hide
From all the world this wonderful event,
And like a peasant breed the noble child.
That none might mark the change of our estate,
We left the country, travell'd to the north,
Bought flocks and herds, and gradually brought forth
Our secret wealth. But God's all-seeing eye
Beheld our avarice, and smote us sore.
For, one by one, all our own children died,
And he, the stranger, sole remain'd the heir
Of what, indeed, was his. Fain, then, would I,
Who with a father's fondness lov'd the boy,
Have trusted him, now in the dawn of youth,
With his own secret; but my anxious wife,
Foreboding evil, never would consent.
Meanwhile the stripling grew in years and beauty;
And, as we oft observ'd, he bore himself
Not as the offspring of our cottage blood;
For nature will break out: mild with the mild,
But with the forward he was fierce as fire,
And night and day he talk'd of war and arms.
I set myself against his warlike bent;
But all in vain: for when a desperate band
Of robbers from the savage mountains came——

Lady Rand.—Eternal Providence! What is thy name?

Pris.—My name is Norval; and my name he bears.

Lady Rand.—'Tis he! 'tis he himself! It is my son!
Oh, sovereign mercy! 'Twas my child I saw!
No wonder, Anna, that my bosom burn'd.

Anna.—Just are your transports: ne'er was woman's heart
Prov'd with such fierce extremes. High-fated dame!
But yet remember that you are beheld
By servile eyes; your gestures may be seen
Impassion'd strange; perhaps your words o'erheard.

Lady Rand.—Well dost thou counsel, Anna: heav'n bestow
On me that wisdom which my state requires!

Anna.—The moments of deliberation pass,
And soon you must resolve. This useful man
Must be dismiss'd in safety ere my lord
Shall with his brave deliverer return.

Pris.—If I, amidst astonishment and fear,
Have of your words and gestures rightly judg'd,
Thou art the daughter of my ancient master;
The child I rescu'd from the flood is thine.

Lady Rand.—With thee dissimulation now were vain.
I am indeed the daughter of Sir Malcolm;
The child thou rescu'dst from the flood is mine.

Pris.—Blest be the hour that made me a poor man!
My poverty hath sav'd my master's house!

Lady Rand.—Thy words surprise me: sure thou dost not feign:
The tear stands in thine eye: such love from thee
Sir Malcolm's house deserv'd not; if aright
Thou told'st the story of thine own distress.

Pris.—Sir Malcolm of our barons was the flower;
The fastest friend, the best, the kindest master:
But, ah! he knew not of my sad estate.
After that battle, where his gallant son,
Your own brave brother, fell, the good old lord
Grew desperate and reckless of the world;
And never as he erst was wont, went forth
To overlook the conduct of his servants.
By them I was thrust out, and them I blame:
May heav'n so judge me as I judg'd my master!
And God so love me as I love his race!

Lady Rand.—His race shall yet reward thee. On thy faith
Depends the fate of thy lov'd master's house.
Rememb'rest thou a little lonely hut,
That like a holy hermitage appears
Among the cliffs of Carron?

Pris.—I remember.
The cottage of the cliffs.

Lady Rand.—'Tis that I mean:
There dwells a man, of venerable age,
Who in my father's service spent his youth:
Tell him I sent thee, and with him remain
Till I shall call upon thee to declare,
Before the king and nobles, what thou now
To me hast told. No more but this, and thou
Shalt live in honor all thy future days:
Thy son so long shall call thee father still,
And all the land shall bless the man who sav'd
The son of Douglas, and Sir Malcolm's heir.
Remember well my words: if thou should'st meet
Him whom thou call'st thy son, still call him so;
And mention nothing of his nobler father.

Pris.—Fear not that I shall mar so fair an harvest
By putting in my sickle ere 'tis ripe.
Why did I leave my home and ancient dame?
To find the youth to tell him all I knew,
And make him wear these jewels in his arms;
Which might, I thought, be challeng'd, and so bring
To light the secret of his noble birth.

(Lady Randolph goes toward the servants.)

Lady Rand.—This man is not th' assassin you suspected,
Tho' chance combin'd some likelihoods against him.
He is the faithful bearer of the jewels
To their right owner, whom in haste he seeks.
'Tis meet that you should put him on his way,
Since your mistaken zeal hath dragg'd him hither.

(Exeunt stranger and servants.)

My faithful Anna, dost thou share my joy?
I know thou dost. Unparallel'd event!
Reaching from heav'n to earth, Jehovah's arm

Snatch'd from the waves and brings to me my son!
Judge of the widow and the orphan's father,
Accept a widow's and a mother's thanks
For such a gift! What does my Anna think
Of the young eaglet of a valiant nest?
How soon he gaz'd on bright and burning arms,
Spurn'd the low dunghill where his fate had thrown him,
And tower'd up to the region of his sire!

Anna.—How fondly did your eyes devour the boy!
Mysterious nature, with the unseen cord
Of powerful instinct, drew you to your own.

Lady Rand.—The ready story of his birth believ'd
Suppress'd my fancy quite; nor did he owe
To any likeness my so sudden favor:
But now I long to see his face again,
Examine every feature, and find out
The lineaments of Douglas, or my own.
But most of all I long to let him know
Who his true parents are, to clasp his neck,
And tell him all the story of his father.

Anna.—With wary caution you must bear yourself
In public, lest your tenderness break forth,
And in observers stir conjectures strange.
For if a cherub in the shape of woman
Should walk this world, yet defamation would,
Like a vile cur, bark at the angel's train——
To-day the baron started at your tears.

Lady Rand.—He did so, Anna! well thy mistress knows,
If the least circumstance, mote of offense,
Should touch the baron's eye, his sight would be
With jealousy disorder'd. But the more
It does behoove me instant to declare
The birth of Douglas, and assert his rights.
This night I purpose with my son to meet,
Reveal the secret, and consult with him:
For wise is he, or my fond judgment errs.
As he does now, so look'd his noble father,
Array'd in nature's ease: his mien, his speech,
Were sweetly simple, and full oft deceiv'd

Those trivial mortals who seem always wise.
 But, when the matter match'd his mighty mind,
 Up rose the hero: on his piercing eye
 Sat observation: on each glance of thought
 Decision follow'd, as the thunder-bolt
 Pursues the flash.

Anna.—That demon haunts you still:
 Behold Glenalvon.

Lady Rand.—Now I shun him not.
 This day I brav'd him in behalf of Norval:
 Perhaps too far: at least my nicer fears
 For Douglas thus interpret.

Enter Glenalvon.

Glenalvon.—Noble dame!
 The hov'ring Dane at last his men hath landed:
 No band of pirates, but a mighty host,
 That come to settle where their valor conquers,
 To win a country, or to lose themselves.

Lady Rand.—But whence comes this intelligence, Glenalvon?

Glen.—A nimble courier sent from yonder camp,
 To hasten up the chieftains of the north,
 Inform'd me, as he pass'd, that the fierce Dane
 Had on the eastern coast of Lothian landed,
 Near to that place where the sea-rock immense,
 Amazing Base, looks o'er a fertile land.

Lady Rand.—Then must this western army march to join
 The warlike troops that guard Edina's tow'rs.

Glen.—Beyond all question. If impairing time
 Has not effac'd the image of a place
 Once perfect in my breast, there is a wild
 Which lies to westward of that mighty rock,
 And seems by nature formed for the camp
 Of water-wafted armies, whose chief strength
 Lies in firm foot, unflank'd with warlike horse:
 If martial skill directs the Danish lords,
 There inaccessible their army lies
 To our swift-scouring horse, the bloody field
 Must man to man, and foot to foot, be fought.

Lady Rand.—How many mothers shall bewail their sons!
How many widows weep their husbands slain!
Ye dames of Denmark! ev'n for you I feel,
Who, sadly sitting on the sea-beat shore,
Long look for lords that never shall return.

Glen.—Oft has th' unconquer'd Caledonian sword
Widow'd the north. The children of the slain
Come, as I hope, to meet their fathers' fate.
The monster war, with her infernal brood,
Loud yelling fury, and life-ending pain,
Are objects suited to Glenalvon's soul.
Scorn is more grievous than the pains of death:
Reproach more piercing than the pointed sword.

Lady Rand.—I scorn thee not, but when I ought to scorn;
Nor e'er reproach, but when insulted virtue
Against audacious vice asserts herself.
I own thy worth, Glenalvon; none more apt
Than I to praise thine eminence in arms,
And be the echo of thy martial fame.
No longer vainly feed a guilty passion:
Go and pursue a lawful mistress—glory.
Upon the Danish chiefs redeem thy fault,
And let thy valor be the shield of Randolph.

Glen.—One instant stay, and hear an alter'd man.
When beauty pleads for virtue, vice, abash'd,
Flies its own colors, and goes o'er to virtue.
I am your convert; time will show how truly:
Yet one immediate proof I mean to give.
That youth, for whom your ardent zeal to-day
Somewhat too haughtily defied your slave,
Amidst the shock of armies I'll defend,
And turn death from him with a guardian arm.
Sedate by use, my bosom maddens not
At the tumultuous uproar of the field.

Lady Rand.—Act thus, Glenalvon, and I am thy friend;
But that's thy least reward. Believe me, sir,
The truly generous is the truly wise;
And he who loves not others, lives unblest.

(Exit Lady Randolph and Anna.)

Glen.—Amen! and virtue is its own reward!

I think that I have hit the very tone
 In which she loves to speak. Honey'd assent,
 How pleasant art thou to the taste of man,
 And woman also! flattery direct
 Rarely disgusts. They little know mankind
 Who doubt its operation: 'tis my key,
 And opes the wicket of the human heart.
 How far I have succeeded now I know not,
 Yet I incline to think her stormy virtue
 Is lull'd awhile: 'tis her alone I fear:
 While she and Randolph live, and live in faith
 And amity, uncertain is my tenure.
 Fate o'er my head suspends disgrace and death
 By that weak hair, a peevish female's will.
 I am not idle: but the ebbs and flows
 Of fortune's tide cannot be calculated.
 That slave of Norval's I have found most apt:
 I show'd him gold, and he has pawn'd his soul
 To say and swear whatever I suggest.
 Norval, I'm told, has that alluring look,
 'Twixt man and woman, which I have observ'd
 To charm the nicer and fantastic dames,
 Who are, like Lady Randolph, full of virtue.
 In raising Randolph's jealousy I may
 But point him to the truth. He seldom errs
 Who thinks the worst he can of womankind. (Exit.)

ACT IV.

Flourish of trumpets.

Enter Lord Randolph.

Lord Randolph.—Summon an hundred horse, by break of day,
 To wait our pleasure at the castle gate.

Enter Lady Randolph.

Lady Randolph.—Alas! my lord! I've heard unwelcome news;
 The Danes are landed.

Lord Rand.—Ay, no inroad this
 Of the Northumbrian bent to take a spoil:
 No sportive war, no tournament essay
 Of some young knight resolv'd to break a spear
 And stain with hostile blood his maiden arms.
 The Danes are landed: we must beat them back,
 Or live the slaves of Denmark.

Lady Rand.—Dreadful times!

Lord Rand.—The fenceless villages are all forsaken;
 The trembling mothers and their children lodg'd
 In wall-girt towers and castles; while the men
 Retire indignant. Yet, like broken waves,
 They but retire more awful to return.

Lady Rand.—Immense, as fame reports, the Danish host——

Lord Rand.—Were it as numerous as loud fame reports,
 An army knit like ours would pierce it thro':
 Brothers that shrink not from each other's side,
 And fond companions, fill our warlike files:
 For his dear offspring, and the wife he loves,
 The husband, and the fearless father arm.
 In vulgar breasts heroic ardor burns,
 And the poor peasant mates his daring lord.

Lady Rand.—Men's minds are temper'd, like their swords, for
 war;
 Lovers of danger, on destruction's brink:
 They joy to rear erect their daring forms.
 Hence, early grave; hence, the lone widow's life:
 And the sad mother's grief-embitter'd age.
 Where is our gallant guest?

Lord Rand.—Down in the vale
 I left him, managing a fiery steed,
 Whose stubbornness had foil'd the strength and skill
 Of every rider. But behold, he comes,
 In earnest conversation with Glenalvon.

Enter Norval and Glenalvon.

Glenalvon! with the lark arise; go forth,
 And lead my troops that lie in yonder vale:

Private I travel to the royal camp:
 Norval, thou goest with me. But say, young **man**!
 Where didst thou learn so to discourse of war,
 And in such terms as I o'erheard to-day?
 War is no village science, nor its phrase
 A language taught among the shepherd swains.

Norval.—Small is the skill my lord delights to praise
 In him he favors. Hear from whence it came.
 Beneath a mountain's brow, the most remote
 And inaccessible, by shepherds trod,
 In a deep cave, dug by no mortal hand,
 A hermit liv'd; a melancholy man,
 Who was the wonder of our wand'ring swains.
 Austere and lonely, cruel to himself,
 Did they report him; the cold earth his bed,
 Water his drink, his food the shepherds' alms.
 I went to see him and my heart was touch'd
 With rev'rence and with pity. Mild he spake,
 And, ent'ring on discourse, such stories told
 As made me oft revisit his sad cell.
 For he had been a soldier in his youth;
 And fought in famous battles, when the peers
 Of Europe, by the bold Godfredo led,
 Against th' usurping infidel display'd
 The blessed cross, and won the holy land.
 Pleas'd with my admiration, and the fire
 His speech struck from me, the old **man** would shake
 His years away, and act his young encounters.
 Then, having show'd his wounds, he'd sit him down
 And all the live-long day discourse of war.
 To help my fancy, in the smooth green turf
 He cut the figures of the marshal'd hosts;
 Describ'd the motions, and explain'd the use
 Of the deep column and the lengthen'd line,
 The square, the crescent and the phalanx firm.
 For all that Saracen or Christian knew
 Of war's vast art was to this hermit known.

Lord Rand.—Why did this soldier in a desert hide
 Those qualities that should have grac'd a camp?

Norr.—That, too, at last I learn'd. Unhappy man!
Returning homeward by Messina's port,
Loaded with wealth and honors bravely won,
A rude and boist'rous captain of the sea
Fasten'd a quarrel on him. Fierce they fought,
The stranger fell, and with his dying breath
Declar'd his name and lineage! Mighty power!
The soldier cried, my brother! Oh! my brother!

Lady Rand.—His brother!

Norr.—Yes; of the same parents born;
His only brother. They exchange'd forgiveness;
And happy, in my mind, was he that died:
For many deaths has the survivor suffer'd.
In the wild desert on a rock he sits,
Or on some nameless stream's untrodden banks,
And ruminates all day his dreadful fate.
At times, alas! not in his perfect mind!
Holds dialogues with his lov'd brother's ghost;
And oft each night forsakes his sullen couch,
To make sad orisons for him he slew.

Lady Rand.—To what mysterious woes are mortals born!
In this dire tragedy were there no more
Unhappy persons? did the parents live?

Norr.—No; they were dead: kind heav'n had clos'd their eyes
Before their son had shed his brother's blood.

Lord Rand.—Hard is his fate; for he was not to blame!
There is destiny in this strange world,
Which oft decrees an undeserved doom:
Let schoolmen tell us why. From whence these sounds?
(Trumpets at a distance.)

Enter an Officer.

Officer.—My lord, the trumpets of the troops of Lorn:
The valiant leader hails the noble Randolph.

Lord Rand.—Mine ancient guest! does he the warriors lead?
Has Denmark rous'd the brave old Knight to arms?

Offi.—No; worn with warfare, he resigns the sword.
His eldest hope, the valiant John of Lorn,
Now leads his kindred bands.

Lord Rand.—Glenalvon, go.

With hospitality's most strong request

Entreat the chief.

(Exit Glenalvon.)

Off.—My lord, requests are vain.

He urges on, impatient of delay,

Stung with the tidings of the foe's approach. (Exit.)

Lord Rand.—May victory sit on the warrior's plume!

Bravest of men! his flocks and herds are safe;

Remote from war's alarms his pastures lie,

By mountains inaccessible secur'd:

Yet foremost he into the plain descends,

Eager to bleed in battles not his own.

Such were the heroes of the ancient world:

Contemners they of indolence and gain;

But still for love of glory, and of arms,

Prone to encounter peril, and to lift

Against each strong antagonist the spear,

I'll go and press the hero to my breast. (Exit.)

Lady Rand.—The soldier's loftiness, the pride and pomp

Investing awful war, Norval, I see,

Transport thy youthful mind.

Norv.—Ah! should they not?

Blest be the hour I left my father's house!

I might have been a shepherd all my days,

And stole obscurely to a peasant's grave.

Now, if I live, with mighty chiefs I stand;

And, if I fall, with noble dust I lie.

Lady Rand.—There is a gen'rous spirit in thy breast

That could have well sustain'd a prouder fortune.

This way with me, under yon spreading beech,

Since lucky chance has left us here alone,

Unseen, unheard, by human eye or ear,

I will amaze thee with a wond'rous tale.

Norv.—Let there be danger, lady, with the secret,

That I may hug it to my grateful heart,

And prove my faith. Command my sword, my life:

These are the sole possessions of poor Norval.

Lady Rand.—Know'st thou these gems?

Norr.—Durst I believe mine eyes,

I'd say I knew them and they were my father's.

Lady Rand.—Thy father's, say'st thou! ah! they were thy father's!

Norr.—I saw them once, and curiously inquir'd

Of both my parents whence such splendor came?

But I was check'd, and more could never learn.

Lady Rand.—Then learn of me, thou art not Norval's son.

Norr.—Not Norval's son!

Lady Rand.—Nor of a shepherd sprung.

Norr.—Lady, who am I, then?

Lady Rand.—Noble thou art;

For noble was thy sire!

Norr.—I will believe——

O! tell me further! Say, who was my father?

Lady Rand.—Douglas!

Norr.—Lord Douglas, whom to-day I saw?

Lady Rand.—His younger brother.

Norr.—And in yonder camp?

Lady Rand.—Alas!

Norr.—You make me tremble—— Sighs and tears!

Lives my brave father?

Lady Rand.—Ah! too brave, indeed!

He fell in battle ere thyself was born.

Norr.—Ah! me unhappy! ere I saw the light?

But does my mother live? I may conclude,

From my own fate, her portion has been sorrow.

Lady Rand.—She lives; but wastes her life in constant woe

Weeping her husband slain, her infant lost.

Norr.—You that are skill'd so well in the sad story

Of my unhappy parents, and with tears,

Bewail their destiny, now have compassion

Upon the offspring of the friends you lov'd!

O! tell me who, and where my mother is!

Oppress'd by a base world, perhaps she bends

Beneath the weight of other ills than grief;

And, desolate, implores of heav'n the aid
Her son should give. It is, it must be so—
Your countenance confesses that she's wretched.
O! tell me her condition! Can the sword—
Who shall resist me in a parent's cause?

Lady Rand.—Thy virtue ends her woe! My son! my son!

Norr.—Art thou my mother?

Lady Rand.—I am thy mother, and the wife of Douglas!

(Falls upon his neck.)

Norr.—O heav'n and earth, how wondrous is my fate!
Art thou my mother! Ever let me kneel!

Lady Rand.—Image of Douglas! Fruit of fatal love!
All that I owe thy sire, I pay to thee.

Norr.—Respect and admiration still possess me,
Checking the love and fondness of a son.
Yet I was filial to my humble parents.
But did my sire surpass the rest of men,
As thou excellest all of womankind?

Lady Rand.—Arise, my son! In me thou dost behold
The poor remains of beauty once admir'd:
The autumn of my days is come already;
For sorrow made my summer haste away.
Yet in my prime I equal'd not thy father:
His eyes were like the eagle's, yet sometimes
Liker the dove's; and, as he pleas'd, he won
All hearts with softness, or with spirit aw'd.

Norr.—How did he fall? Sure, 'twas a bloody field
When Douglas died. O I have much to ask!

Lady Rand.—Hereafter thou shalt hear the lengthen'd tale
Of all thy father's and thy mother's woes.
At present this: thou art the rightful heir
Of yonder castle, and the wide domains
Which now Lord Randolph, as my husband, holds.
But thou shalt not be wrong'd; I have the power
To right thee still: before the king I'll kneel,
And call Lord Douglas to protect his blood.

Norr.—The blood of Douglas will protect itself.

Lady Rand.—But we shall need both friends and favor, boy,
To wrest thy lands and lordship from the gripe
Of Randolph and his kinsman. Yet I think
My tale will move each gentle heart to pity,
My life incline the virtuous to believe.

Norv.—To be the son of Douglas is to me
Inheritance enough. Declare my birth,
And in the field I'll seek for fame and fortune.

Lady Rand.—Thou dost not know what perils and injustice
Await the poor man's valor. O! my son!
The noblest blood of all the land's abash'd,
Having no lacquey but pale poverty,
Too long hast thou been thus attended, Douglas!
Too long hast thou been deem'd a peasant's child.
The wanton heir of some inglorious chief
Perhaps has scorn'd thee, in the youthful sports;
Whilst thy indignant spirit swell'd in vain!
Such contumely thou no more shalt bear:
But how I purpose to redress thy wrongs
Must be hereafter told. Prudence directs
That we should part before yon chiefs return.
Retire, and from thy rustic follower's hand
Receive a billet, which thy mother's care,
Anxious to see thee, dictated before
This casual opportunity arose
Of private conference. Its purport mark;
For, as I there appoint, we meet again.
Leave me, my son! and frame thy manners still
To Norval's, not to noble Douglas' state.

Norv.—I will remember. Where is Norval now?
That good old man.

Lady Rand.—At hand conceal'd he lies,
An useful witness. But beware, my son,
Of yon Glenalvon; in his guilty breast
Resides a villain's shrewdness, ever prone
To false conjecture. He hath griev'd my heart.

Norv.—Has he, indeed? Then let yon false Glenalvon
Beware of me. (Exit.)

Lady Rand.—There burst the smother'd flame!
 O! thou all righteous and eternal King!
 Who father of the fatherless art call'd,
 Protect my son! Thy inspiration, Lord!
 Hath fill'd his bosom with that sacred fire,
 Which in the breasts of his forefathers burn'd:
 Set him on high like them, that he may shine,
 The star and glory of his native land!
 Then let the minister of death descend,
 And bear my willing spirit to its place.
 Yonder they come. How do bad women find
 Unchanging aspects to conceal their guilt?
 When I, by reason and by justice urg'd,
 Full hardly can dissemble with these men
 In nature's pious cause.

Enter Lord Randolph and Glenalvon.

Lord Randolph.—Yon gallant chief,
 Of arms enamor'd, all repose disclaims.

Lady Rand.—Be not, my lord, by his example sway'd:
 Arrange the business of to-morrow now,
 And, when you enter, speak of war no more. (Exit.)

Lord Rand.—'Tis so, by heav'n! her mien, her voice, her eye,
 And her impatience to be gone, confirm it.

Glenalvon.—He parted from her now: behind the mount,
 Among the trees, I saw him glide along.

Lord Rand.—For sad, sequestered virtue she's renown'd!

Glen.—Most true, my lord.

Lord Rand.—Yet this distinguish'd dame
 Invites a youth, the acquaintance of a day,
 Alone to meet her at the midnight hour.
 This assignation (shows a letter) the assassin freed,
 Her manifest affection for the youth,
 Might breed suspicion in a husband's brain,
 Whose gentle consort all for love had wedded;
 Much more in mine. Matilda never lov'd me.
 Let no man, after me, a woman wed,
 Whose heart he knows he has not; though she brings

A mine of gold, a kingdom for her dowry,
For let her seem, like the night's shadowy queen,
Cold and contemplative;—he cannot trust her:
She may, she will, bring shame and sorrow on him;
The worst of sorrows and the worst of shames!

Glen.—Yield not, my lord, to such afflicting thoughts,
But let the spirit of an husband sleep,
Till your own senses make a sure conclusion.
This billet must to blooming Norval go:
At the next turn awaits my trusty spy;
I'll give it him refitted for his master.
In the close thicket take your secret stand;
The moon shines bright, and your eyes may judge
Of their behavior.

Lord Rand.—Thou dost counsel well.

Glen.—Permit me now to make one slight essay
Of all the trophies which vain mortals boast,
By wit, by valor or by wisdom won,
The first and fairest in a young man's eye
Is woman's captive heart. Successful love
With glorious fumes intoxicates the mind!
And the proud conqueror in triumph moves,
Air-born, exalted above vulgar men.

Lord Rand.—And what avails this maxim?

Glen.—Much, my lord!
Withdraw a little: I'll accost young Norval,
And with ironical derisive counsel
Explore his spirit. If he is no more
Than humble Norval, by thy favor rais'd,
Brave as he is, he'll shrink astonish'd from me;
But if he be the fav'rite of the fair,
Lov'd by the first of Caledonia's dames,
He'll turn upon me, as the lion turns
Upon the hunter's spear.

Lord Rand.—'Tis shrewdly thought.

Glen.—When we grow loud, draw near. But let my lord
His rising wrath restrain. (Exit Randolph.)
'Tis strange, by heav'n!

That she should run full tilt her fond career,
 To one so little known. She, too, that seem'd
 Pure as the winter stream, when ice emboss'd
 Whitens its course. Even I did think her chaste,
 Whose charity exceeds not. Precious sex!
 Whose deeds lascivious pass Glenalvon's thoughts!

(Norval appears.)

His port I love; he's in a proper mood
 To chide the thunder, if at him it roar'd.
 Has Norval seen the troops?

Norval.—The setting sun,
 With yellow radiance lighten'd all the vale,
 And as the warriors mov'd, each polish'd helm,
 Corslet or spear glanc'd back his gilded beams.
 The hill they climb'd, and halting at its top,
 Of more than mortal size, tow'ring, they seem'd,
 An host angelic, clad in burning arms.

Glen.—Thou talk'st it well; no leader of our host,
 In sounds more lofty, speaks of glorious war.

Norv.—If I shall e'er acquire a leader's name,
 My speech will be less ardent. Novelty
 Now prompts my tongue, and youthful admiration
 Vents itself freely; since no part is mine
 Of praise pertaining to the great in arms.

Glen.—You wrong yourself, brave sir; your martial deeds
 Have rank'd you with the great: but mark me, Norval;
 Lord Randolph's favor now exalts your youth
 Above his veterans of famous service.
 Let me, who knows the soldiers, counsel you.
 Give them all honor; seem not to command:
 Else they will scarcely brook your late-sprung power,
 Which nor alliance props, nor birth adorns.

Norv.—Sir, I have been accustom'd all my days
 To hear and speak the plain and simple truth:
 And tho' I have been told that there are men
 Who borrowed friendship's tongue to speak their scorn,
 Yet in such language I am little skill'd.
 Therefore, I thank Glenalvon for his counsel,
 Altho' it sounded harshly. Why remind

Me of my birth obscure? Why slur my power
With such contemptuous terms?

Glen.—I did not mean

To gall your pride, which now I see is great.

Norv.—My pride?

Glen.—Suppress it as you wish to prosper.

Your pride's excessive. Yet for Randolph's sake

I will not leave you to its rash direction.

If thus you swell and frown at high-born men,

Think you they will endure a shepherd's scorn?

Norv.—A shepherd's scorn!

Glen.—Yes, if you presume

To bend on soldiers these disdainful eyes,

What will become of you?

Norv.—If this were told——

(*Aside.*)

Hast thou no fears of thy presumptuous self?

Glen.—Ha! Dost thou threaten me?

Norv.—Didst thou not hear?

Glen.—Unwillingly I did; a nobler foe

Had not been question'd thus. But such as thee——

Norv.—Whom dost thou think me?

Glen.—Norval.

Norv.—So I am——

And who is Norval in Glenalvon's eyes?

Glen.—A peasant's son, a wand'ring beggar-boy,

At best no more, even if he speaks the truth.

Norv.—False as thou art, dost thou suspect my truth?

Glen.—Thy truth! thou'rt all a lie; and false as hell

Is the vain-glorious tale thou told'st to Randolph.

Norv.—If I were chain'd, unarm'd and bedrid old,

Perhaps I should revile: but as I am

I have no tongue to rail. The humble Norval

Is of a race who strive not but with deeds.

Did I not fear to free thy shallow valor,

And make thee sink too soon beneath my sword,

I'd tell thee—what thou art. I know thee well.

Glen.—Dost thou not know Glenalvon, born to command
Ten thousand slaves like thee?

Norv.—Villain, no more:
Draw and defend thy life. I did design
To have defid' thee in another cause:
But heaven accelerates its vengeance on thee.
Now for my own and Lady Randolph's wrongs.

Enter Lord Randolph.

Lord Randolph.—Hold, I command you both. The man that
stirs
Makes me his foe.

Norv.—Another voice than thine
That threat had vainly sounded, noble Randolph.

Glen.—Hear him, my lord; he's wondrous condescending!
Mark the humility of shepherd Norval!

Norv.—Now you may scoff in safety. (Sheaths his sword.)

Lord Rand.—Speak not thus,
Taunting each other; but unfold to me
The cause of quarrel, then I judge betwixt you.

Norv.—Nay, my good lord, tho' I revere you much,
My cause I plead not, nor demand your judgment.
I blush to speak; I will not, cannot speak
Th' opprobrious words that I from him have borne.
To the liege lord of my dear native land
I owe a subject's homage; but even him
And his high arbitration I'd reject.
Within my bosom reigns another lord;
Honor, sole judge and umpire of itself.
If my free speech offend you, noble Randolph,
Revoke your favors, and let Norval go
Hence as he came, alone, but not dishonor'd.

Lord Rand.—Thus far I'll mediate with impartial voice:
The ancient foe of Caledonia's land
Now waves his banners o'er her frightened fields.
Suspend your purpose till your country's arms
Repel the bold invader; then decide
The private quarrel.

Glen.—I agree to this.

Norv.—And I.

Enter Servant.

Servant.—The banquet waits.

Lord Rand.—We come. (Exit Randolph and Servant.)

Glen.—Norval,

Let not our variance mar the social hour,
Nor wrong the hospitality of Randolph.
Nor frowning anger, nor yet wrinkled hate,
Shall stain my countenance. Smooth thou thy brow;
Nor let our strife disturb the gentle dame.

Norv.—Think not so lightly, sir, of my resentment;
When we contend again, our strife is mortal. (Exeunt.)

ACT V.

The Wood.

Enter Douglas.

Douglas.—This is the place, the centre of the grove;
Here stands the oak, the monarch of the wood.
How sweet and solemn is this midnight scene!
The silver moon, unclouded, holds her way
Thro' skies where I could count each little star.
The fanning west wind scarcely stirs the leaves;
The river, rushing o'er its pebbled bed,
Imposes silence with a stilly sound.
In such a place as this, at such an hour,
If ancestry can be in aught believ'd,
Descending spirits have convers'd with man,
And told the secrets of the world unknown.

Enter Old Norval.

Norval.—'Tis he. But what if he should chide me hence!
His just reproach I fear. (Douglas turns and sees him.)
Forgive, forgive,
Canst thou forgive the man, the selfish man,
Who bred Sir Malcolm's heir a shepherd's son?

Doug.—Kneel not to me: thou art my father still:
Thy wish'd-for presence now completes my joy.
Welcome to me, my fortunes thou shalt share,
And ever honor'd with thy Douglas live.

Norr.—And dost thou call me father? Oh, my son!
I think that I could die to make amends
For the great wrong I did thee. 'Twas my crime
Which in the wilderness so long conceal'd
The blossom of thy youth.

Doug.—Not worse the fruit,
That in the wilderness the blossom blow'd.
Among the shepherds, in the humble cot,
I learn'd some lessons which I'll not forget
When I inhabit yonder lofty towers.
I, who was once a swain, will ever prove
The poor man's friend; and when my vassals bow,
Norval shall smooth the crested pride of Douglas.

Norr.—Let me but live to see thine exaltation!
Yet grievous are my fears. Oh, leave this place,
And those unfriendly towers.

Doug.—Why should I leave them?

Norr.—Lord Randolph and his kinsmen seek your life.

Doug.—How know'st thou that?

Norr.—I will inform you how.

When evening came, I left the secret place
Appointed for me by your mother's care,
And fondly trod in each accustom'd path
That to the castle leads. While thus I rang'd,
I was alarm'd with unexpected sounds
Of earnest voices. On the persons came;
Unseen I lurk'd, and overheard them name
Each other as they talk'd, Lord Randolph this,
And that Glenalvon: still of you they spoke,
And of the lady: threat'ning was their speech,
Tho' but imperfectly my ear could hear it.
'Twas strange, they said, a wonderful discovery;
And ever and anon they vow'd revenge.

Doug.—Revenge! for what?

Norv.—For being what you are;

Sir Malcolm's heir: how else have you offended?
When they were gone, I hied me to my cottage,
And there sat musing how I best might find
Means to inform you of their wicked purpose.
But I could think of none: at last, perplex'd,
I issu'd forth, encompassing the tower
With many a weary step and wishful look.
Now Providence hath brought you to my sight,
Let not your too courageous spirit scorn
The caution which I give.

Doug.—I scorn it not.

My mother warn'd me of Glenalvon's baseness:
But I will not suspect the noble Randolph.
In our encounter with the vile assassins,
I mark'd his brave demeanor: him I'll trust.

Norv.—I fear you will too far.

Doug.—Here in this place

I wait my mother's coming: she shall know
What thou hast told: her counsel I will follow:
And cautious ever are a mother's counsels.
You must depart; your presence may prevent
Our interview.

Norv.—My blessings rest upon thee!

Oh, may heav'n's hand, which sav'd thee from the wave,
And from the sword of foes, be near thee still;
Turning mischance, if aught hangs o'er thy head,
All upon mine! (Exit.)

Doug.—He loves me like a parent;

And must not, shall not lose the son he loves,
Altho' his son has found a nobler father.
Eventful day! how hast thou chang'd my state!
Once on the cold and winter-shaded side
Of a bleak hill, mischance had rooted me,
Never to thrive, child of another soil:
Transplanted now to the gay sunny vale,
Like the green thorn of May my fortune flowers.
Ye glorious stars! high heav'n's resplendent host!
To whom I oft have of my lot complain'd,

Hear and record my soul's unalter'd wish!
 Dead or alive, let me but be renown'd!
 May heav'n inspire some fierce gigantic Dane
 To give a bold defiance to our host!
 Before he speaks it out I will accept;
 Like Douglas conquer, or like Douglas die.

Enter Lady Randolph.

Lady Randolph.—My son! I heard a voice——

Doug.—The voice was mine.

Lady Rand.—Didst thou complain aloud to nature's ear
 That thus in dusky shades, at midnight hours,
 By stealth the mother and the son should meet?

(Embracing him.)

Doug.—No; on this happy day, this better birthday,
 My thoughts and words are all of hope and joy.

Lady Rand.—Sad fear and melancholy still divide
 The empire of my breast with hope and joy.
 Now hear what I advise.

Doug.—First let me tell
 What may the tenor of your counsel change.

Lady Rand.—My heart forebodes some evil!

Doug.—'Tis not good.

At eve, unseen by Randolph and Glenalvon,
 The good old Norval in the grove o'erheard
 Their conversation: oft they mention'd me
 With dreadful threat'nings; you they sometimes nam'd.
 'Twas strange, they said, a wonderful discovery;
 And ever and anon they vow'd revenge.

Lady Rand.—Defend us, gracious God: we are betray'd;
 They have found out the secret of thy birth;
 It must be so. That is the great discovery:
 Sir Malcolm's heir is come to claim his own,
 And he will be reveng'd. Perhaps even now,
 Arm'd and prepar'd for murder, they but wait
 A darker and more silent hour, to break
 Into the chamber where they think thou sleep'st.
 This moment, this, heav'n hath ordain'd to save thee!
 Fly to the camp, my son!

Doug.—And leave you here?

No: to the castle let us go together,
Call up the ancient servants of your house,
Who in their youth did eat your father's bread,
Then tell them loudly that I am your son.
If in the breasts of men one spark remains
Of sacred love, fidelity or pity,
Some in your cause will arm. I ask but few
To drive those spoilers from my father's house.

Lady Rand.—Oh, nature, nature! what can check thy force?

Thou genuine offspring of the daring Douglas!
But rush not on destruction: save thyself,
And I am safe. To me they mean no harm.
Thy stay but risks thy precious life in vain.
That winding path conducts thee to the river.
Cross where thou seest a broad and beaten way,
Which, running eastward, leads thee to the camp.
Instant demand admittance to Lord Douglas.
Show him these jewels, which his brother wore.
Thy look, thy voice, will make him feel the truth,
Which I by certain proof will soon confirm.

Doug.—I yield me and obey; but yet my heart
Bleeds at this parting. Something bids me stay
And guard a mother's life. Oft have I read
Of wondrous deeds by one bold arm achiev'd.
Our foes are two: no more: let me go forth,
And see if any shield can guard Glenalvon.

Lady Rand.—If thou regard'st thy mother, or rever'st
Thy father's mem'ry, think of this no more.
One thing I have to say before we part;
Long wert thou lost; and thou art found, my child,
In a most fearful season. War and battle
I have great cause to dread. Too well I see
Which way the current of thy temper sets:
To-day I've found thee. Oh! my long-lost hope!
If thou to giddy valor giv'st the rein,
To-morrow I may lose my son forever.
The love of thee, before thou saw'st the light,
Sustain'd my life when thy brave father fell.

If thou shalt fall, I have nor love nor hope
In this waste world! my son, remember me!

Doug.—What shall I say? how can I give you comfort?

The god of battles of my life dispose
As may be best for you! for whose dear sake
I will not bear myself as I resolv'd.
But yet consider, as no vulgar name
That which I boast sounds among martial men,
How will inglorious caution suit my claim?
The post of fate unshrinking I maintain.
My country's foes must witness who I am.
On the invaders' heads I'll prove my birth,
Till friends and foes confess the genuine strain.
If in this strife I fall, blame not your son,
Who, if he lives not honor'd, must not live.

Lady Rand.—I will not utter what my bosom feels.
Too well I love that valor which I warn.
Farewell, my son! my counsels are but vain.

(Embracing.)

And, as high heav'n hath will'd it, all must be.

(Separate.)

Gaze not on me, thou wilt mistake the path:
I'll point it out again.

Just as they are separating, enter from the wood Lord Randolph and Glenalvon.

Lord Randolph.—Not in her presence.
Now——

Glenalvon.—I'm prepar'd.

Lord Rand.—No; I command thee stay.
I go alone; it never shall be said
That I took odds to combat mortal man.
The noblest vengeance is the most complete.

(Exit Lord Randolph.)

(Glenalvon makes some steps to the same side of the stage, listens, and speaks.)

Glen.—Demons of death, come settle on my sword,
And to double slaughter guide it home!
The lover and the husband both must die.

(Lord Randolph behind the scenes.)

Lord Rand.—Draw, villain! draw.

Doug.—Assail me not, Randolph;
Not as thou lov'st thyself.

(Clashing of swords. Glenalvon running out.)

Now is the time.

Enter Lady Randolph at the opposite side of the stage, faint
and breathless.

Lady Randolph.—Lord Randolph, hear me; all shall be thine
own:

But spare! Oh, spare my son!

Enter Douglas, with a sword in each hand.

Douglas.—My mother's voice!
I can protect thee still.

Lady Rand.—He lives, he lives:
For this, for this to heav'n eternal praise!
But sure I saw thee fall.

Doug.—It was Glenalvon.
Just as my arm had master'd Randolph's sword,
The villain came behind me; but I slew him.

Lady Rand.—Behind thee! Ah, thou'rt wounded! O my child,
How pale thou look'st! and shall I lose thee now?

Doug.—Do not despair: I feel a little faintness;
I hope it will not last. (Leans upon his sword.)

Lady Rand.—There is no hope!
And we must part! the hand of death is on thee!
O my beloved child! O Douglas, Douglas!

Doug.—Too soon we part; I have not long been Douglas.
O destiny! hardly thou dealest with me:
Clouded and hid, a stranger to myself,
In low and poor obscurity I liv'd.

Lady Rand.—Has heav'n preserved thee for an end like this?

Doug.—O had I fallen as my brave fathers fell,
Turning with great effort the tide of battle!
Like them I should have smil'd and welcom'd death.
But thus to perish by a villain's hand!
Cut off from nature's and from glory's course
Which never mortal was so fond to run.

Lady Rand.—Hear, Justice! hear! stretch thy avenging arm.
(Douglas falls.)

Doug.—Unknown I die; no tongue shall speak of me.
Some noble spirits, judging by themselves,
May yet conjecture what I might have proved,
And think life only wanting to my fame:
But who shall comfort thee?

Lady Rand.—Despair! despair!

Doug.—O had it pleas'd high heav'n to let me live
A little while! My eyes that gaze on thee
Grow dim apace! my mother—oh, my mother! (Dies.)

Enter Lord Randolph and Anna.

Lord Randolph.—Thy words, the words of truth, have pierc'd
my heart.
I am the stain of knighthood and of arms.
Oh! if my brave deliverer survives
The traitor's sword——

Anna.—Alas! look there, my lord.

Lord Rand.—The mother and her son! How curst I am!
Was I the cause? No: I was not the cause.
Yon matchless villain did seduce my soul
To frantic jealousy.

Anna.—My lady lives:
The agony of grief hath but suppress'd
Awhile her powers.

Lord Rand.—But my deliverer's dead!
The world did once esteem Lord Randolph well.
Sincere of heart, for spotless honor fam'd:
And, in my early days, glory I gain'd
Beneath the holy banner of the cross.
Now past the noon of life, shame comes upon me;

Reproach, and infamy, and public hate,
Are near at hand: for all mankind will think
That Randolph basely stabb'd Sir Malcolm's heir.

(Lady Randolph recovering.)

Lady Rand.—Where am I now? still in this wretched world?
Grief cannot break a heart so hard as mine.
My youth was worn in anguish: but youth's strength
With hope's assistance, bore the brunt of sorrow;
And train'd me on to be the object now,
On which Omnipotence displays itself,
Making a spectacle, a tale of me,
To awe its vassal, man.

Lord Rand.—O misery!
Amidst thy raging grief I must proclaim
My innocence.

Lady Rand.—Thy innocence!

Lord Rand.—My guilt
Is innocence compar'd with what thou think'st it.

Lady Rand.—Of thee I think not. what have I to do
With thee or anything? My son! my son!
My beautiful! my brave! how fond was I
Of thee, and of thy valor! My proud heart
O'erflowed this day with transport, when I thought
Of growing old amidst a race of thine,
Who might make up to me their father's childhood,
And bear my brother's and my husband's name:
Now all my hopes are dead! A little while
Was I a wife! a mother not so long!
What am I now? I know. But I shall be
That only whilst I please; for such a son
And such a husband drive me to my fate. (Runs out.)

Lord Rand.—Follow her, Anna: I myself would follow,
But in this rage she must abhor my presence.
(Exit Anna.)

Enter Old Norval.

Norval.—I hear the voice of woe; heaven guard my child!

Lord Rand.—Already is the idle, gaping crowd,
The spiteful vulgar come to gaze on Randolph.
Begone.

Norr.—I fear thee not. I will not go.

Here I'll remain. I'm an accomplice, lord,
 With thee in murder. Yes, my sins did help
 To crush down to the ground this lovely plant
 O noblest youth that ever yet was born!
 Sweetest and best, gentlest and bravest spirit,
 That ever bless'd the world! Wretch that I am,
 Who saw that noble spirit swell and rise
 Above the narrow limits that confin'd it!
 Yet never was by all thy virtues won
 To do thee justice and reveal the secret,
 Which, timely known, had rais'd thee far above
 The villain's snare! Oh! I am punish'd now!
 These are the hairs that should have strew'd the ground,
 And not the locks of Douglas.

(Tears his hear and throws himself upon the body
 of Douglas.)

Lord Rand.—I know thee now: thy boldness I forgive!

My crest is fallen. For thee I will appoint
 A place of rest, if grief will let thee rest.
 I will reward, altho' I cannot punish.
 Curst, curst Glenalvon, he escap'd too well,
 Tho' slain and baffled by the hand he hated.
 Foaming with rage and fury to the last,
 Cursing his conqueror, the felon died.

Enter Anna.

Anna.—My lord! my lord!

Lord Rand.—Speak: I can hear of horror.

Anna.—Horror, indeed!

Lord Rand.—Matilda?

Anna.—Is no more;

She ran, she flew like lightning up the hill,
 Nor halted till the precipice she gain'd,
 Beneath whose low'ring top the river falls
 Ingulph'd in rifted rocks: thither she came,
 As fearless as the eagle lights upon it,
 And headlong down.

Lord Rand.—'Twas I! alas! 'twas I
That fill'd her breast with fury; drove her down
The precipice of death! Wretch that I am!

Anna.—O had you seen her last despairing look!
Upon the brink she stood, and cast her eyes
Down on the deep: then lifting up her eyes
And her white hands to heaven, seeming to say,
Why am I forced to this? she plung'd herself
Into the empty air.

Lord Rand.—I will not vent,
In vain complaints, the passion of my soul.
Peace in this world I never can enjoy.
These wounds the gratitude of Randolph gave.
They speak aloud, and with the voice of fate
Denounce my doom. I am resolv'd. I'll go
Straight to the battle, where the man that makes
Me turn aside must threaten worse than death.
Thou, faithful to thy mistress, take this ring,
Full warrant of my power. Let every rite
With cost and pomp upon their funerals wait:
For Randolph hopes he never shall return.

(Exeunt omnes.)

Home's tragedy of *Douglas* aroused such a storm of indignation among the clergy that he resigned his charge as minister of a Scottish kirk, but was afterward appointed lecturer in a Presbyterian chapel in London and later private secretary to Lord Bute, who, as secretary of state, procured for him a pension of £300 a year; so that he lost nothing through the intolerance of the priesthood. Before *Douglas* he had brought out the tragedy of *Agis*, which was rejected by Garrick as quite unsuitable for the stage. After an interval of several years, *Douglas* was followed by the *Siege of Aquileia*, which Garrick put on the stage, himself tak-

ing the part of Æmilius. His *Fatal Discovery* had a run of nine nights, and his *Alonzo* met with fair success; but *Alfred*, his last tragedy, was a flat failure, whereupon he abandoned writing for the stage. The works of Home were collected and published by Henry Mackenzie in 1822, and at that time had still a certain degree of popularity; but apart from his *Douglas*, he is now comparatively unknown, though his writings, both in prose and verse, are far superior to those of his contemporaries.

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